



H. G. Hine

J. Sadler

JOSH BEANPOLE'S COURTSHIP.

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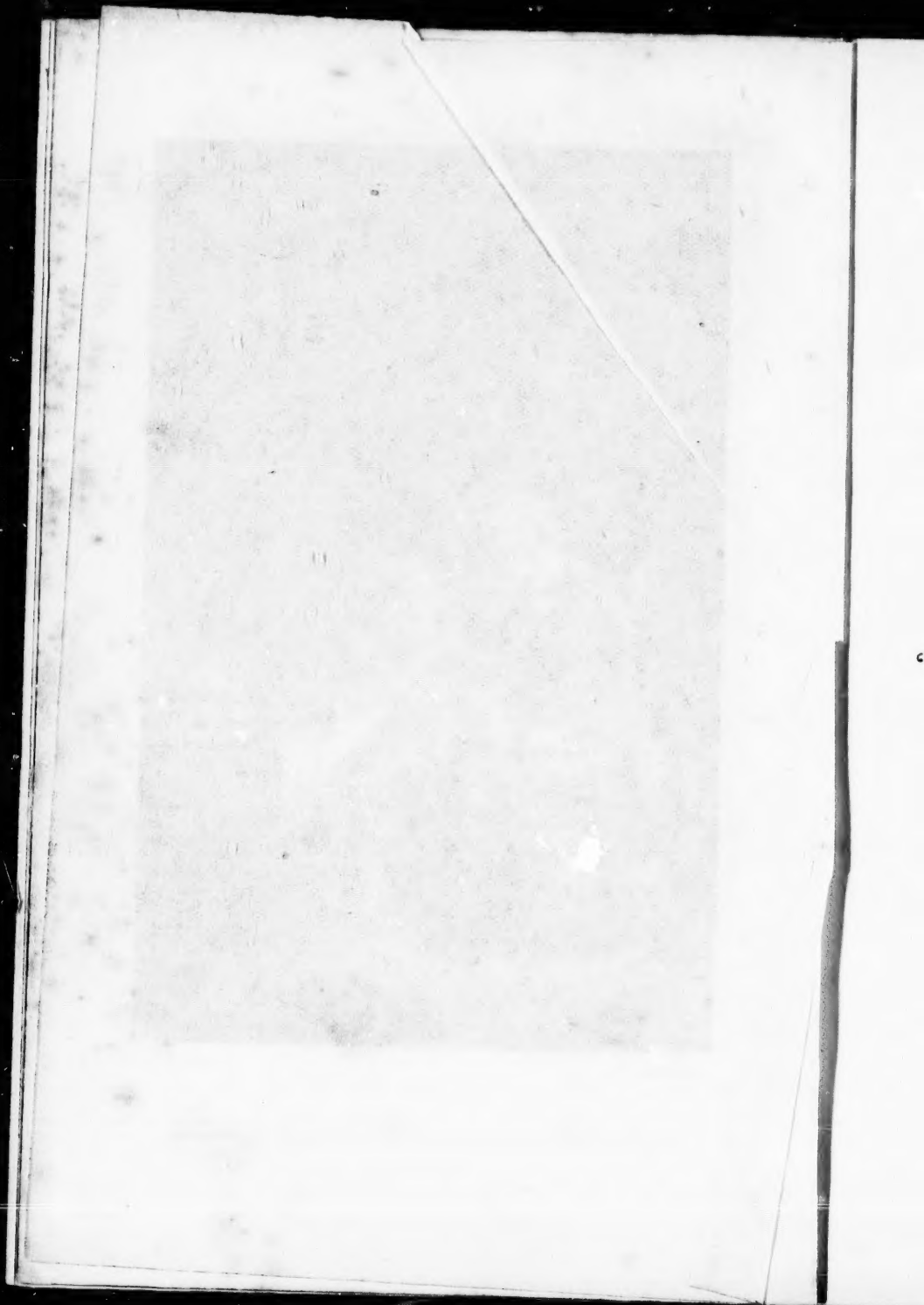
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KATHARINE HENRIOT

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TRAITS
OF
AMERICAN HUMOUR,
BY NATIVE AUTHORS.

EDITED AND ADAPTED

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK,"
"THE OLD JUDGE," "NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE,"
"WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES,"
ETC. ETC.



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PREFACE.

Most Europeans speak of America as they do of England, France, or Prussia, as one of the great countries of the world, but without reference to the fact that it covers a larger portion of the globe than all of them collectively. In like manner as the New England confederacy originally comprised the most enlightened and most powerful transatlantic provinces, and the inhabitants accidentally acquired the appellation of Yankees, so this term is very generally applied to all Americans, and is too often used as a national, instead of a provincial or a sectional sobriquet. In order to form an accurate estimate of the national humour, it is necessary to bear these two great popular errors constantly in view. The Eastern and Western, Northern and Southern States, though settled by a population speaking the same language, and enjoying the same institutions, are so distant from each other, and differ so widely in climate, soil, and productions, that they have but few features in common; while the people, from the same causes, as well as from habits, tastes, necessities, the sparseness or density of population, free soil or slave labour, the intensity, absence, or weakness of religious enthusiasm, and many other peculiarities, are equally dissimilar.

Hence humour has a character as local as the boundaries of these civil subdivisions.

The same diversity is observable in that of the English, Irish, and Scotch, and in their mirthful sallies the character of each race is plainly discernible.

That of the English is at once manly and hearty, and, though embellished by fancy, not exaggerated; that of the Irish extravagant, reckless, rollicking, and kind-hearted; while that of the Scotch is sly, cold, quaint, practical, and sarcastic.

The population of the Middle States, in this particular, reminds a stranger of the English, that of the West resembles the Irish, and the Yankees bear a still stronger affinity to the Scotch. Among the Americans themselves these distinctions

are not only well understood and defined, but are again subdivided so as to apply more particularly to the individual States.

Each has a droll appellation by which the character of its yeomanry, as composed of their ability, generosity, or manliness on the one hand, and craft, economy, or ignorance of the world on the other, is known and illustrated. Thus, there are the Hoosiers of Indiana, the Suckers of Illinois, the pukes of Missouri, the buck-eyes of Ohio, the red-horses of Kentucky, the mud-heads of Tennessee, the wolverines of Michigan, the eels of New England, and the corn-crackers of Virginia.

For the purpose of this work however it is perhaps sufficient merely to keep in view the two grand divisions of East and West, which, to a certain extent, may be said to embrace those spread geographically North and South, with which they insensibly blend.

Of the former, New England and its neighbours are pre-eminent. The rigid discipline and cold, gloomy tenets of the Puritans required and enforced a grave demeanour, and an absence from all public and private amusements, while a sterile and ungrateful soil demanded all the industry and required all the energy of the people to ensure a comfortable support. Similar causes produce a like result in Scotland. Hence the striking resemblance in the humour of the two people. But though the nonconformist fathers controlled and modified the mirth of the heart, they could not repress it. Nature is more powerful than conventional regulations, and it soon indemnified itself in the indulgence of a smile for the prohibition of unseemly laughter.

Hypocrisy is short-lived :

"Vera redivit facies, dissimulata perit."

The Puritans, as one of their descendants has well observed,* emigrated "that they might have the privilege to work and pray, to sit upon hard benches, and to listen to painful preaching as long as they would, even unto thirty-seventhly, if the Spirit so willed it. They were not," he says, "plump, rosy-gilled Englishmen that came hither, but a hard-faced, atrabillious, earnest-eyed race, stiff from long wrestling with the Lord in prayer, and who had taught Satan to dread the new Puritan hug. Add two hundred years' influence of soil, climate, and exposure, with its necessary result of idiosyncrasies, and we have the present Yankee, full of expedient, half master of all trades, inventive in all but the beautiful, full of shifts, not yet capable of comfort, armed at all points against the old enemy,

* See Introduction to Biglow's Papers, p. xix.

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hunger, longanimous, good at patching, not so careful for what is best as for what *will do*, with a clasp to his purse, and a button to his pocket, not skilled to build against time, as in old countries, but against sore-pressing need, accustomed to move the world with no assistants but his own two feet, and no lever but his own long forecast. A strange hybrid, indeed, did circumstances beget here, in the New World, upon the old Puritan stock, and the earth never before saw such mystic practicalism, such niggard geniality, such calculating fanaticism, such cast-iron enthusiasm, such unwilling humour, such close-fisted generosity. This new "*Græculus esuriens*" will make a living out of anything. He will invent new trades as well as new tools. His brain is his capital, and he will get education at all risks. Put him on Juan Fernandez, and he will make a spelling-book first, and a salt-pan afterwards. *In cælum jussuris, ibit*, or the other way either, it is all one so that anything is to be got by it. Yet after all, thin, speculative Jonathan is more like the Englishman of two centuries ago than John Bull himself is. He has lost somewhat in solidity, has become fluent and adaptable, but more of the original groundwork of character remains.

New England was most assuredly an unpromising soil wherein to search for humour; but fortunately that is a hardy and prolific plant, and is to be found in some of its infinite varieties, in more or less abundance everywhere.

To the well-known appellation of Yankees their Southern friends have added, as we have seen, in reference to their remarkable pliability, the denomination of "Eels." Their humour is not merely original, but it is clothed in quaint language. They brought with them many words now obsolete and forgotten in England, to which they have added others derived from their intercourse with the Indians, their neighbours the French and Dutch, and their peculiar productions. Their pronunciation, perhaps, is not very dissimilar to that of their Puritan forefathers. It is not easy to convey an adequate idea of it on paper, but the following observations may render it more intelligible:

"1.* The chief peculiarity is a drawling pronunciation, and sometimes accompanied by speaking through the nose, as *eend* for *end*, *dawg* for *dog*, *Gawd* for *God*, &c.

"2. Before the sounds *ow* and *oo*, they often insert a short *i*, which we will represent by the *y*; as *kyow* for *cow*, *vyow* for *vow*, *tyoo* for *too*, *dyco* for *do*, &c.

"3.† The genuine Yankee never gives the rough sound to

* See Introduction to Dictionary of Americanisms, p. xxiv., and Biglow's Papers.

† See Introduction to Biglow's Papers, p. xxiv.

the *r* when he can help it, and often displays considerable ingenuity in avoiding it, even before a vowel.

"4. He seldom sounds the final *g*, a piece of self-denial, if we consider his partiality for nasals. The same may be said of the final *d*, as *han'* and *stan'* for *hand* and *stand*.

"5. The *h* in such words as *while*, *when*, *where*, he omits altogether.

"6. In regard to *a* he shows some inconsistency, sometimes giving a close and obscure sound, as *hev* for *have*, *hedy* for *handy*, *ez* for *as*, *thet* for *that*; and again giving it the broad sound as in *father*, as *hansome* for *handsome*.

"7. *Au* in such words as *daughter* and *slaughter* he pronounces *ah*."

Wholly unconstrained at first by conventional usages, and almost beyond the reach of the law, the inhabitants of the West indulged, to the fullest extent, their propensity for fun, frolic, and the wild and exciting sports of the chase. Emigrants from the border States, they engrafted on the dialects of their native places exaggerations and peculiarities of their own, until they acquired almost a new language, the most remarkable feature of which is its amplification. Everything is superlative, awful, powerful, monstrous, dreadful, almighty, and all-fired. As specimens of these extravagancies four narratives of the Adventures of the celebrated Colonel Crocket are given, of which the humour consists mainly in the marvellous. As they were designed for "the million," among whom the scenes are laid, rather than the educated class, they were found to contain many expressions unfit for the perusal of the latter, which I have deemed it proper to expunge. Other numbers in both volumes, liable to the same objection, have been subjected to similar expurgation, which, without affecting their raciness, has materially enhanced their value.

The tales of both West and South are written in the language of the rural population, which differs as much from the Yankee dialect as from that of the Cockney. The vocabulary of both is most copious. Some words owe their origin to circumstances, and local productions, and have thence been spread over the whole country, and adopted into general use; such as * *backwoods*, *breadstuffs*, *barrens*, *bottoms*, *cane-brake*, *cypress-brake*, *corn-broom*, *corn-shucking*, *clearing*, *deadening*, *diggings*, *dug-out*, *flats*, *husking*, *prairie*, *shingle*, *sawyer*, *salt-lick*, *savannah*, *snag*.

Metaphorical and odd expressions often originated in some curious anecdote or event, which was transmitted by tradition,

* Introduction to Dictionary of Americanisms.

and soon made the property of all. Political writers and stump speakers perform a prominent part in the invention and diffusion of these phrases. Among others may be mentioned: *To cave in, to acknowledge the corn, to flash in the pan, to bark up the wrong tree, to pull up stakes, to be a caution, to fizzle out, to flat out, to fix his flint, to be among the missing, to give him Jesy, to see the elephant, to fly around, to tucker out, to use up, to walk into, to mizzle, to absquatulate, to cotton, to hifer, &c.*

Many have been adopted from the Indians; from corn, come *samp, hominy, and sapawn*; from the manive plant, *mandioca, and tapioca*; and from articles peculiar to the aborigines, the words *canoe, hammock, tobacco, moccasin, penmican, barbecue, hurricane, pow-wow.*

The Spaniards have contributed their share to the general stock, as *canyon, cavortin, cheparral, pistareen, rancho, vamos.*

The French have also furnished many more, such as *cache, calaboose, bodette, bayou, sault, levee, crevasse, habitan, charivari, portage.* *

The "Edinburgh Review" for April, 1844, in an article on the provincialisms of the European languages, states the result of an inquiry into the number of provincial words which had then been arrested by local glossaries at 30,687.

"Admitting that several of them are synonymous, superfluous, or common to each county, there are nevertheless many of them which, although alike orthographically, are vastly dissimilar in signification. Making these allowances, they amount to a little more than 20,000; or, according to the number of English counties hitherto illustrated, to the average ratio of 1478 to a county. Calculating the twenty-six unpublished in the same ratio (for there are supposed to be as many words collected by persons who have never published them), they will furnish 36,428 additional provincialisms, forming in the aggregate 59,000 words in the colloquial tongue of the lower classes, which can, for the chief part, produce proofs of legitimate origin."

The process of coinage has been far more rapid and extensive in America than in Europe. That of words predominates in the Western, and that of phrases in the Eastern States. The chief peculiarity in the pronunciation of Southern and Western people, is the giving of a broader sound than is proper to certain vowels; as *whar* for *where*, *thar* for *there*, *bar* for *bear*.

In the following table of words incorrectly pronounced, such as belong to New England are designated by the letters

* See Dictionary of Americanisms.

N. E.; those exclusively Western, by the letter W.; the Southern words by S.; the rest are common to various parts of the Union. In this attempt at classification there are doubtless errors and imperfections; for an emigrant from Vermont to Illinois would introduce the provincialisms of his native district into his new residence.

Arter	<i>for</i> After.	Larnin	<i>for</i> Learning.
Ary	" Either.	Lives	" Lief.
Attackted	" Attack'd.	Leetle	" Little.
Anywheres	" Anywhere.	Nary	" Neither.
Bachelor	" Bachelor.	Ourn	" Ours.
Baguet	" Bayonet.	Perlite	" Polite.
Bar	" Bear, W.	Racket	" Rocket.
Becase	" Because.	Rale	" Real.
Bile	" Boil.	Rench	" Rince.
Cheer	" Chair.	Rheumatiz	" Rheumatism.
Chimbley	" Chimney.	Ruff	" Roof, N.E.
Cupo's	" Cupola.	Sarcer	" Saucer.
Cote 'd	" Caught.	Sarce	" Sauce.
Critter	" Creature.	Sarve	" Serve.
Curous	" Curious.	Sass	" Sauce.
Dar	" Dare, W.	Sassy	" Saucy.
Darter	" Daughter.	Seace	" Scarce.
Deu	" Do, N.E.	Seass	" Scarce, W.
Delightsome	" Delightful.	Sen	" Since, W.
Drowned	" Drown'd.	Shay	" Chaise, N.E.
Druv	" Drove, W.	Shet	" Shut, S.
Dubous	" Dubious.	Sistern	" Sisters, W.
Eend	" End.	Sich	" Such.
Everywheres	" Everywhere.	Sot	" Sat.
Gal	" Girl.	Sorter	" Sort of.
Gin	" Give.	Stan	" Stand, N.E.
Git	" Get.	Star	" Stair, W.
Gineral	" General.	Stun	" Stone, N.E.
Guv	" Gave.	Stiddy	" Steady, N.E.
Gownd	" Gown.	Spettacle	" Spectacle.
Har	" Hair, W.	Spile	" Spoil.
Hath	" Hearth, S.	Squinch	" Quench.
Hender	" Hinder.	Strcech	" Stretch, W.
Hist	" Hoist.	Suthin	" Something.
Hum	" Home, N.E.	Tech	" Touch.
Humbly	" Homely, N.E.	Tend	" Attend.
Hull	" Whole, W.	Tell'd	" Told, N.E.
Ile	" Oil.	Thar	" There, W.
Innemy	" Enemy.	Timersome	" Timorous.
Jaunders	" Jaundice.	Tossel	" Tassel.
Jest	" Just.	Umbrell	" Umbrella.
Jeems	" James.	Varmint	" Vermin, W.
Jine	" Join.	Wall	" Well, N.E.
Jist	" Joist.	Whar	" Where, W.
Kittle	" Kettle.	Yaller	" Yellow.
Kiver	" Cover.	Yourn	" Yours.
Larn	" Learn.		

Until lately the humour of the Americans has been chiefly oral. Up to the period when the publication of the first American "Sporting Magazine" was commenced at Baltimore, in 1829, and which was immediately followed by the publication, in New York, of "The Spirit of the Times," there existed no such class of writers in the United States, as have since that recent day conferred such popularity on this description of literature.

The New York "Constellation" * was the only journal expressly devoted to wit and humour; but "The Spirit of the Times" soon became the general receptacle of all these fugitive productions. The ability with which it was conducted, and the circulation it enjoyed, induced the proprietors of other periodicals to solicit contributions similar to those which were attracting so much attention in that paper. To collect, arrange, and preserve these specimens of American humour, and present them to the British reader in an unobjectionable shape, is the object of this compilation.

* See Porter's account of "The Spirit of the Times."

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TRAITS OF AMERICAN HUMOUR.

I.

MY FIRST AND LAST SPEECH IN THE GENERAL COURT.

IF I live a thousand years, I shall never forget the day I was chosen representative. Isaac Longlegs ran himself out of a year's growth to bring me the news, for I staid away from town meeting out of dignity, as the way is, being a candidate. At first I could not believe it; though when I spied Isaac coming round Slouch's corner, with his coat-tails flapping in the wind, and pulling straight ahead for our house, I felt certain that something was the matter, and my heart began to bump, bump so, under my jacket, that it was a wonder it didn't knock a button off. However, I put on a bold face, and when Isaac came bolting into the house I pretended not to be thinking about it.

"Lieutenant Turniptop!" says Isaac, "huh, huh, you've got the election."

"Got what?" says I, pretending to be surprised, in a coolish sort of a way.

"Got the election," says he, "all hollow. You've got a majority of thirteen—a clear majority—clean, smack smooth, and no two words about it!"

"Pooh!" says I, trying to keep cool, though at the same time I felt all over—I can't tell how—my skin didn't seem to fit me. "Pooh!" says I again; but the idea of going into public life, and being called Squire Turniptop, was almost too much for me. I seemed to feel as if I was standing on the tip top of the north pole, with my head above the clouds, the sun on one side, and the moon on the other. "Got the election?" says I; "ahem! hem! hem!" And so I tried to put on a proper dignity, but it was hard work. "Got a majority?" says I, once more.

"As sure as a gun," says Isaac. "I heard it with my own ears. Squire Dobbs read it off to the whole meeting. 'Tobias Turniptop has fifty-nine, and—is—chosen!'"

I thought I should have choked! six millions of glorious ideas seemed to be swelling up all at one time within me. I had just been reading Doctor Growler's sermon on the end of the world, but now I thought the world was only beginning.

"You're representative to the General Court," said Isaac, striking his forefinger into the palm of his left hand, with as much emphasis as if a new world had been created.

I felt more magnanimous than ever.

"I shan't accept," says I. (The Lord pardon me for lying.)

"Shan't accept!" screamed out Isaac in the greatest amazement, his great goggle eyes starting out of his head. "Shall I go back and tell them so?"

"I mean I'll take it into consideration," said I, trying to look as important as I could. "It's an office of great responsibility, Isaac," I said; "but I'll think of it, and after mature deliberation, if my constituents insist upon my going—Isaac, what'll you take to drink?"

I could not shut my eyes to sleep all that night; and did nothing but think of the General Court, and how I should look in the great hall of the State House, marching up to my seat to take possession. I determined right off to have a bran new blue coat with brass buttons; but on second thoughts, I remembered hearing Colonel Crabtree say that the Members wore their wrappers. So I concluded that my pepper-and-salt coat, with the blue satin pantaloons, would do very well. I decided though to have my drab hat new ironed, and countermanded the orders for the cow-hide boots, because kid skin would be more genteel. In addition to this, because public men should be liberal, and make a more respectable appearance than common folks, I didn't hesitate long in making up my mind about having a watch-chain and an imitation breast-pin. "The check handkerchief," thinks I to myself, "is as good as new; and my pigtail queue will look splendidly if the old ribbon is a little scoured!"

It can't be described how much the affairs of the nation occupied my attention all the next day, and three weeks afterwards. Ensign Shute came to me about the Byfield pigs, but I couldn't talk of anything but my legislative responsibilities.

"The critters beat all natur for squealing," says he, "but they cut capitally to pork."

"Ah!" says I, "there must be a quorum before we can do business."

"The old grunter," says he, "will soon be fat enough to kill."

"Yes," says I, "the Speaker has the casting vote."

"Your new pig-pen," says he, "will hold 'em all."

"I shall take my seat," said I, "and be sworn in according to the Constitution."

"What's your opinion of corn-cobs?" says he.

"The Governor and Council will settle that," says I.

The concerns of the whole commonwealth seemed to be resting all on my shoulders, as heavy as a fifty-six; and everything I heard or saw made me think of the dignity of my office. When I met a flock of geese on the school-house green, with Deacon Dogskin's old gander at the head, "There," says I, "goes the Speaker, and all the honourable members."

This was talked of up and down the town, as a proof that I felt a proper responsibility; and Simon Sly said the comparison was capital. I thought so too. Everybody wished me joy of my election, and seemed to expect great things; which I did not fail to lay to heart. So having the eyes of the whole community upon me, I saw that nothing would satisfy them if I didn't do something for the credit of the town. Squire Dobbs, the chairman of our select men, preached me a long lecture on responsibility.

"Lieutenant Turniptop," says he, "I hope you'll keep up the reputation of Squashborough."

"I hope I shall, Squire," says I, for I felt my dignity rising.

"It's a highly responsible office, this going to the General Court," says he.

"I'm altogether aware of that," says I, looking serious.

"I'm aware of the totally and officially."

"I'm glad you feel responsible," says he.

"I'm bold to say that I *do* feel the responsibility," says I; "and I feel more and more responsible the more I think of it."

"Squashborough," says the Squire, "has always been a credit to the commonwealth."

"Who doubts it?" says I.

"And a credit to the General Court," says he.

"Ahem!" says I.

"I hope you'll let 'em know what's what," says he.

"I guess I know a thing or two," says I.

"But," says the Squire, "a representative can't do his duty to his constituents without knowing the Constitution. It's my opinion that you ought not to vote for the dog-tax."

"That's a matter that calls for due deliberation," says I. So I went home and began to prepare for my legislative duties.

I studied the statute on cart-wheels, and the act in addition to an act entitled an act.

People may sit at home in their chimney-corners and imagine it is an easy thing to be a representative, but this is a very great mistake. For three weeks I felt like a toad under a harrow, such a weight of responsibility as I felt on thinking of my duty to my constituents. But when I came to think how much I was expected to do for the credit of the town, it was overwhelming. All the representatives of our part of the country had done great things for their constituents, and I was determined not to do less. I resolved therefore, on the very first consideration, to stick to the following scheme,—

To make a speech.

To make a motion for a bank in Squashborough.

To move that all salaries be cut down one half, except the pay of the representatives.

To second every motion for adjournment.

And—*always* to vote against the Boston members.

As to the speech, though I had not exactly made up my mind about the subject of it, yet I took care to have it all written beforehand. This was not so difficult as some folks may think; for as it was all about my constituents and responsibility, and Bunker Hill and heroes of Seventy-six, and dying for liberty, it would do for any purpose—with a word tucked in here and there. After I had got it well by heart, I went down in Cranberry Swamp, out of hearing and sight of anybody, and delivered it off, to see how it would go. It went off in capital style till I got nearly through, when just as I was saying, "Mr Speaker, here I stand for the Constitution," Tom Thumper's old he-goat popped out of the bushes behind, and gave me such a butt in the rear, that I was forced to make an adjournment to the other side of the fence to finish it. After full trial, I thought best to write it over again and put in more responsibility, with something more about "fought, bled, and died."

When the time came for me to set off to Boston, you may depend on it I was all of a twitter. In fact I did not altogether know whether I was on my head or my heels. All Squashborough was alive; the whole town came to see me set out. They all gave me strict charge to stand up for my constituents and vote down the Boston members. I promised them I would, for "I'm sensible of my responsibility," says I. I promised, besides, to move heaven and earth to do something for

Squashborough. In short, I promised everything, because a representative could not do less.

At last I got to Boston, and being in good season, I had three whole days to myself before the Session opened. By way of doing business, I went round to all the shops, pretending I wanted to buy a silk-handkerchief. I managed it so as not to spend anything, though the shopkeepers were mighty sharp, trying to hook me for a bargain; but I had my eye-teeth cut, and took care never to offer within ninepence of the first cost. Sometimes they talked saucy, in a joking kind of a way, if I happened to go more than three times to the same shop; but when I told them I belonged to the General Court, it struck them all up of a heap, and they did not dare to do anything but make faces to one another. I think I was down upon them there.

The day I took my seat was a day of all the days in the year! I shall never forget it. I thought I had never lived till then. Giles Elderberry's exaltation when he was made hog-reeve was nothing to it. As for the procession, that beat cock-fighting. I treated myself to half a sheet of gingerbread, for I felt as if my purse would hold out for ever. However, I can't describe everything. We were sworn in, and I took my seat, though I say it myself. I took my seat: all Boston was there to see me do it. What a weight of responsibility I felt!

It beats all natur to see what a difficulty there is in getting a chance to make a speech. Forty things were put to the vote, and passed, without my being able to say a word, though I felt certain I could have said something upon every one of them. I had my speech ready, and waiting for nothing but a chance to say "Mr Speaker," but something always put me out.

This was losing time dreadfully, however I made it up seconding motions, for I was determined to have my share in the business, out of regard to my constituents.

It's true I seconded the motions on both sides of the question, which always set the other members a laughing, but says I to them,—

"That's my affair. How do you know what my principles are?"

At last two great questions were brought forward, which seemed to be too good to lose. These were the Dog-town turn-pike, and the Cart-wheel question.

The moment I heard the last one mentioned, I felt convinced it was just the thing for me. The other members thought just so, for when it came up for discussion, a Berkshire member gave me a jog with the elbow.

"Turniptop," says he, "now's your time, Squashborough for ever!"

No sooner said than done. I twitched off my hat, and called out,—

"Mr Speaker!"

As sure as you live I had caught him at last. There was nobody else had spoken quick enough, and it was as clear as preachen I had the floor.

"Gentleman from Squashborough," says he, I heard him say it.

Now, thinks I to myself, I must begin, whether or no. "Mr Speaker!" says I, again, but I only said it to gain time, for I could hardly believe I actually had the floor, and all the congregated wisdom of the commonwealth was listening and looking on: the thought of it made me crawl all over. "Mr Speaker!" says I, once more. Everybody looked round at me. Thinks I to myself, "there's no clawing off this hitch. I must begin, and so here goes!"

Accordingly I gave a loud hem! said, "Mr Speaker!" for the fourth time. "Mr Speaker. I rise to the question—" though it did not strike me I had been standing up ever since I came into the house. "I rise to the question, Mr Speaker," says I. But to see how terribly strange some things work. No sooner had I fairly rose to the question, and got a chance to make my speech, than I began to wish myself a hundred miles off.

Five minutes before I was as bold as a lion, but now I should have been glad to crawl into a knot-hole. "Mr Speaker, I rise to the question," says I again, but I am bound to say, the more I rose to the question the more the question seemed to fall away from me. And just at that minute, a little fat round-faced man, with a bald head, that was sitting right before me, speaks to another member, and says,—

"What squeaking fellow is that?"

It dashed me a good deal, and I don't know but I should have sat right down without another word, but Colonel Crabapple, the member for Turkeytown, gave me a twitch by the tail of my wrapper.

"That's right, Turniptop," says he, "give them the grand touch."

This had a mighty encouraging effect, and so I hemmed and hawed three or four times, and at last made a beginning.

"Mr Speaker," says I, "this is a subject of vital importance. The question is, Mr Speaker, on the amendment. I have a decided opinion on that subject, Mr Speaker. I'm altogether

opposed to the last gentleman, and I feel bound in duty to my constituents, Mr Speaker, and the responsibility of my office, to express my mind on this subject. Mr Speaker, our glorious forefathers fought, bled, and died for glorious liberty. I'm opposed to this question, Mr Speaker—my constituents have a vital interest in the subject of cart-wheels.

"Let us take a retrospective view, Mr Speaker, of the present condition of all the kingdoms and tribes of the earth.

"Look abroad, Mr Speaker, over the wide expansion of nature's universe—beyond the blazing billows of the Atlantic.

"Behold Buonaparte going about like a roaring thunderbolt! All the world is turned topsy-turvy, and there is a terrible rousing among the sons of men.

"But to return to this subject, Mr Speaker. I'm decidedly opposed to the amendment: it is contrary to the principles of freemen and the principles of responsibility. Tell it to your children, Mr Speaker, and to your children's children, that freedom is not to be bartered, like Esau, for a mess of potash. Liberty is the everlasting birthright of the grand community of nature's freemen. Sir, the member from Boston talks of horse-shoes, but I hope we shall stand up for our rights. If we only stand up for our rights, Mr Speaker, our rights will stand up for us, and we shall all stand uprightly without shivering or shaking. Mr Speaker, these are awful times; money is hard to get, whatever the gentleman from Rowley may say about pumpkins.

"A true patriot will die for his country. May we all imitate the glorious example and die for our country. Give up keeping cows! Mr Speaker, what does the honourable gentleman mean? Is not agriculture to be cultivated? He that sells his liberty, Mr Speaker, is worse than a cannibal, a hotten-tot, or a hippopotamus. The member from Charlestown has brought his pigs to a wrong market. I stand up for cart-wheels, and so do my constituents. When our country calls us, Mr Speaker, may we never be backward in coming forward; and all honest men ought to endeavour to keep the rising generation from falling. Not to dwell upon this point, Mr Speaker, let us now enter into the subject."

Now it happened that just at this moment the little fat, bald-headed, round-faced man wriggled himself round just in front of me, so that I could not help seeing him; and just as I was saying "rising generation," he twisted the corners of his mouth into a queer sort of pucker on one side, and rolled the whites of his little, grey, twinkling eyes right up in my face. The members all stared right at us, and made a kind of snicker-

ing cluck, cluck, cluck, that seemed to run whistling over the whole house.

I felt awfully bothered, I can't tell how, but it gave me such a jerk off the hooks, that I could not remember the next words, so that I felt in my pocket for the speech,—it was not there; then in my hat, it wasn't there; then behind me, then both sides of me, but lo! and behold, it was not to be found. The next instant I remembered that I had taken it out of my hat in a shop in Dock Square that morning, while I was comparing the four corners of my check handkerchief with a bandanna. That was enough—I knew as quick as lightning that I was a gone goose. I pretended to go on with my speech, and kept saying “rising generation,” “my constituents,” “enter into the subject, Mr Speaker.” But I made hawk's-meat of it you may depend; finally, nobody could stand it any longer. The little fat man with the round face put his thumb to the side of his nose, and made a sort of twinkling with his fingers; the Speaker began to giggle, and the next minute the whole house exploded like a bomb-shell. I snatched up my hat under cover of the smoke, made one jump to the door, and was downstairs before you could say “second the motion!”

II.

HOSS ALLEN, OF MISSOURI.

THIS celebrated gentleman is a recognized “hoss” certainly; and, we are told, rejoices as much at his cognomination as he did at his nomination for the chair gubernatorial, last election. He did not run well enough to reach the chair, though it appears, from his own account, that his *hoss* qualities, “anyhow,” fall considerable below those of the sure-enough animal. This is his story, which he is very fond of relating up by Palmyry.

“You see, boys, I came to old river, and found I had to swim. Had best clothes on, and didn't know what to do. ‘What river?’ Why, Salt river. Our Salt, here in Missouri, darned thing; always full when don't want it. Well, boys, you knows Hoss Allen—no back out in him, anyhow! Stripped to the skin, just tied clothes up in a bundle, strapped it on the citter's head, and 'cross we swum together. Well, don't you think, while I was gittin' up the bank, the wicked thing got away,

and started off with my clothes on his head; and the more I ran, and hollered, and 'whoa'd,' the more I couldn't catch the cussed varmint. 'Way he'd go and I arter—hot as tophit too all the way, and yaller flies about; and when I did get tol'ble near, he'd stop and look, cock his ears, and give a snuff, as if he never smelt a man afore, and then streak it off agin, as if I had been an Ingin.

"Well, boys, all I had to do was to keep a follerin' on, and keep flies off; and I did, till we came to a slough, and says I, 'Now, old feller, I got you;' and I driv him in. Well, arter all, do you know, fellers, the awful critter wouldn't stick! He went in and in, and by'm-by came to a deep place, and swum right across. A fact—true as thunder! Well, you see, when I cum to the deep place I swum too; and, do you know, that the darned beast just nat'rally waited till I got out, and looked at me all over, and I could act'ly see him laffin'; and I *was* nasty enough to make a hoss laugh, any how!

"Well, thinks I, old feller, recon you've had fun enough with me *now*; so I gits some sticks, and scrapes myself all over, and got tol'ble white again, and then begins to coax the varmint. Well, I 'whoa'd and 'old boy'd,' and cum up right civil to him, I tell ye—and he took it mighty condescendin' too; and jist when I had him sure, cussed if he didn't go right back into the slough agin, swum the deep place, walked out, and stood on t'other side, waitin' for me.

"Well, by this time the yaller flies cum at me agin, and I jist nat'rally went in after the blasted beast, and stood afore him on t'other side, *just as nasty as before*—did, by thunder, boys! Well, he *laffed* agin, till he nearly shook the bundle off; and 'way he went, back agin, three miles, to the river; and then he jest stopped dead, and waited till I cum up to him, and jest kind a axed me to cum and take hold of the bridle, and then guv a kick and a 'ruction, and went in agin, laffin' all the time; and right in the middle, hang me! if he didn't shake my clothes off, and 'way they went, down stream, while he swum ashore; and I, jest nat'rally, lay down on the bank, and cussed all creation.

"Well, you see, boys, there I lays 'bove a hour, when I sees a feller pullin' up stream in a skift, a-tryin' on a coat, and says I,—'Stranger, see here, when you're done gittin' my coat on, I'll thank you for *my shirt*!' And the feller sees how it was, and pulls ashore, and helps me.

"I tell you what, boys, you may talk of hoss lafs; but, when you want a good one, just think of *Hoss Allen*!"

III.

THE WIDOW RUGBY'S HUSBAND.

SOME ten or twelve years ago, one Summeval Dennis kept the "Union Hotel," at the seat of Justice of the county of Tallapoosa. The house took its name from the complexion of the politics of its proprietor, he being a true-hearted Union man, and opposed, as I hope all my readers are, at all points to the damnable heresy of *nullification*. In consequence of the candid exposition of his political sentiments upon his sign-board mine host of the "Union" was liberally patronized by those who coincided with him in his views.

In those days party spirit was, in that particular locality, exceedingly bitter and proscriptive; and had Summeval's chickens been less tender, his eggs less impeachable, his coffee more sloppy, the "Union Hotel" would still have lost no guest, its keeper no dinners. But, as Dennis was wont to remark, "The *Party* relied on his honour, as an honest man, but more especially as an honest *Union* man, he was bound to give them the value of their money."

Glorious fellow was Summeval! Capital landlady was his good wife, in all the plenitude of her *embonpoint*! Well-behaved children too were Summeval's, from the shaggy and red-headed representative of paternal peculiarities, down to little Solomon of the sable locks, whose "favour" puzzled the neighbours, and set at defiance all known physiological principles. Good people, all, were the Dennises. May a hungry man never fall among worse!

Among the political friends who had for some years bestowed their patronage, semi-annually, during Court-week, upon the proprietor of the "Union," was Captain Simon Suggs, whose deeds of valour and strategy are not known to the public. The Captain had "put up" with our friend Summeval time and again; had puffed the "Union," both "before the face and behind the back" of its owner, until it seemed a miniature of the microcosm that bears the name of Astor; and, in short, was so generally useful, accommodating, and polite, that nothing short of long-continued and oft-repeated failures to *settle his bills* could have induced Summeval to consider Suggs in other light than as the best friend the "Union" or any other house ever had. But, alas! Captain Suggs had, from one occasion

to another, upon excuses the most plausible, and with protestations the most profound, invariably left the fat larder and warm beds of the "Union," without leaving behind the slightest pecuniary remuneration with Summeval.

For a long time, the patient innkeeper bore the imposition with a patience that indicated some hope of eventual payment; but year in and year out, and the money did not come. Mrs Dennis at length spoke out, and argued the necessity of a tavern-keeper's collecting his dues, if he was disposed to do justice to himself and family.

"Suggs is a nice man in his talk," she said, "nobody can fault him, as far as that is concerned; but smooth talk never paid for flour and bacon;" and so she recommended to her leaner half, that the next time, summary measures should be adopted to secure the amount in which the Captain was indebted to the "Union Hotel."

Summeval determined that his wife's advice should be strictly followed; for he had seen, time and again, that *her* suggestions had been the salvation of the establishment.

"Hadrn't she kept him from pitchin' John Seagroves, neck and heels, out of the window for sayin' that nullification warn't treason, and John C. Calhoun warn't as bad as Benedict Arnold? And hadn't John been a good payin' customer ever since? That was what he wanted to know."

The next session of the Circuit Court after this prudent conclusion had been arrived at in Dennis's mind--the Circuit Court with all its attractions of criminal trials, poker-playing lawyers, political caucuses and possible monkey shows, found Captain Suggs snugly housed at the "Union."

Time passed on swiftly for a week. The judge was a hearty liquor-loving fellow, and lent the Captain ten dollars "on sight." The Wetumpka and Montgomery lawyers bled freely. In short, everything went bravely on for the Captain, until a man with small-pox pits and a faro-box came along. The Captain yielded to the temptation, yielded with a presentiment on his mind that he should be "slain." The "tiger" was triumphant, and Suggs was left without a dollar!

As if to give intensity to his distress, on the morning after his losses at the faro-bank, the friendly Clerk of the Court hinted to Suggs that the grand jury had found an indictment against him for gaming. Here was a dilemma! Not only out of funds, but obliged to decamp before the adjournment of the Court--obliged to lose all opportunity of redeeming his "fallen fortunes" by further plucking the greenhorns in attendance.

"This here," said Simon, "is an everlastin' fix! a mile

and a quarter square and fenced in all round. What's a *reasonable* man to do? Ain't I bin workin' and strivin' all for the best? Ain't I done my duty? Cuss that mahogany box. I wish the man that invented it had had his head sawed off with a cross-cut *just afore* he thought on't. Now thar's the sence in *short cards*. All's fair, and cheat and cheat alike is the order; and the longest pole knocks down persimmon. But whar's the reason in one of your darned boxes, full of springs and the like, and the better *no* advantages, *except* now and then when he kin kick up a squabble, and *the dealer's afeard of him*.

"I'm for doin' things on the square. What's a man without his honour? Ef natur give me a gift to beat a feller at 'old sledge' and the like, it's all right! But whar's the justice in a thing like farrer, that ain't got but one side! It's strango what a horrir I have for the cussed thing. No matter how I make an honest rise, I'm sure to 'back it off' at farrer. As my wife says, '*farrer's my besettin' sin*.' It's a weakness—a soft spot, it's a—a—let me see!—it's a way I've got of a runnin' agin Providence. But hello! here's Dennis."

When the inn-keeper walked up, Captain Suggs remarked to him that there was a "little paper out," signed by Tom Garrett, in his *official capacity*, that was calculated to hurt feelin's, if he remained in town, and so he desired that his horse might be saddled and brought out.

Summeval replied to this by presenting to the Captain a slip of paper containing entries of many charges against Suggs, and in favour of the "Union Hotel."

"All right," said Suggs; "I'll be over in a couple of weeks and settle."

"Can't wait; want money to buy provisions; account been standing two years; thirty-one dollars and fifty cents is money these days," said Dennis, with unusual firmness.

"Confound your ugly face," vociferated Suggs, "I'll *give you my note!* that's enough among gentlemen, I suppose?"

"Hardly," returned the inn-keeper, "hardly; we want the cash; you're note ain't worth the trouble of writin' it."

"Dam you!" roared Suggs, "dam you for a biscuit-headed *nullifier!* I'll give you a mortgage on the best half section of land in the county; *south* half of 13, 21, 29!"

"Captain Suggs," said Dennis, drawing off his coat, "you've called me a nullifier, and that's what I *won't* stand from *no* man. Strip! and I'll whip as much dog out of you as'll make a full pack of hounds. You swindlin' robber!"

This hostile demonstration alarmed the Captain, and he set in to soothe his angry landlord.

"Sum, old fel," he said, in most honeyed tones, "Sum, old fel! be easy. I'm not a fightin' man—" and here Suggs drew himself up with dignity, "I'm not a fightin' man *except* in the cause of my country! *Thar* I'm *allers* found! Come, old fellow—do you reckon ef you'd been a nullifier, I'd ever been ketched at yourhouse? No, no! you *ain't* no part of a nullifier, but you are rather hard down on your Union friends that allers puts up with you. Say, won't you take the mortgage?—the land's richly worth a thousand dollars, and let me have Old Bill."

The heart of Dennis was melted at the appeal thus made. It was to his good-fellowship and his party feelings. So putting on his coat, he remarked that he "rather thought he would take the mortgage. However," he added, seeing Mrs Dennis standing at the door of the tavern watching his proceedings, "he would see his wife about it."

The Captain and Dennis approached the landlady and made known the state of the case.

"You see, Cousin Betsey,"—Suggs always *cousined* any lady whom he wished to *cozen*—"you see, Cousin Betsey, the fact is, I'm down just now in the way of money, and you and Summeval bein' afraid I'll run away and never come back—"

"T'aint that *I'm* afraid of," said Mrs Dennis.

"What then?" asked Suggs.

"Of your comin' back, eatin' us out of house and home, and *never payin' nothin'!*"

"Well," said the Captain, slightly confused at the lady's directness; "well, seein' that's the way the mule kicks, as I was sayin', I proposed to Sum here, as long as him and you distrusts an old *Union* friend that's stuck by your house like a tick even when the red-mouthed nullifiers swore you was feedin' us *soap-tails* on *bull-beef* and *blue collards*—I say, as long as that's the case, I propose to give you a mortgage on the south half of 21, 13, 29. It's the best half section in the county, and it's worth forty times the amount of your bill."

"It looks like that ought to do," said Summeval, who was grateful to the Captain for defending his house against the slanders of the nullifiers; "and seein' that Suggs has always patronized the Union and *voted the whole ticket*—"

"Never *split* in my life," dropped in Suggs, with emphasis.

"I," continued Dennis, "am for takin' the mortgage, and lettin' him take Old Bill and go; for I know it would be a satisfaction to the nullifiers to have him put in jail."

"Yes," quoth the Captain, sighing, "I'm about to be tuk up and made a martyr of on account of the *Union*; but I'll die true to my *prinsipples*, see if I don't."

"They shan't take you," said Dennis, his long, lank form stiffening with energy as he spoke; "as long as they put it on *that* hook, hanged ef they shall. Give us the mortgage and slope!"

"You ain't got no rights to that land; I jist know it, or you wouldn't want to mortgage it for a tavern bill," shouted Mrs. Dennis; "and I tell you and Summeval *both*, that Old Bill don't go out of that stable till the money's paid—mind, I say *money*—into *my* hand," and here the good lady turned off and called Bob, the stable-boy, to bring her the stable key.

The Captain and Summeval looked at each other like two children school-boys. It was clear that no terms short of payment in money would satisfy Mrs. Dennis. Suggs saw that Dennis had become interested in his behalf; so acting upon the idea, he suggested,—

"Dennis, suppose *you* loan me the money?"

"Egad, Suggs, I've been thinkin' of that; but as I have only a fifty dollar bill, and my wife's key bein' turned on that, there's no chance. Drott it, I'm sorry for you."

"Well, the Lord 'll purvide," said Suggs.

As Captain Suggs could not get away that day, evidently, he arranged, through his friend Summeval, with the clerk, not to issue a capias until the next afternoon. Having done this, he cast around for some way of raising the wind; but the fates were against him, and at eleven o'clock that night he went to bed in a fit of the blues, that three pints of whiskey had failed to dissipate. An hour or two after the Captain had got between the sheets, and after every one else was asleep, he heard some one walk unsteadily, but still softly, up-stairs. An occasional hiccup told that it was some fellow drunk; and this was confirmed by a heavy fall, which the unfortunate took as soon as, leaving the railing, he attempted to travel *suis pedibus*.

"Oh! good Lord!" groaned the fallen man; "who'd a thought it! Me, John P. Pullum, drunk and fallen down! I never was so before. This world's a turnin' over and over. Oh, Lord! Charley Stone got me into it. What will Sally say if she hears it? Oh, Lord!"

"That thar feller," said the Captain to himself, "is the victim of vice. I wonder ef he's got any money?" and the Captain continued his soliloquy inaudibly.

Poor Mr. Pullum, after much tumbling about, and sundry repetitions of his fall, at length contrived to get into bed, in a room adjoining that occupied by the Captain, and only separated from it by a thin partition.

"I'm very—very—oh, Lord!—drunk! Oh! me, is this

John P. Pullum that—good Heavens! I'll faint—married Sally Rugby? oh! oh!"

"Ah! I'm so weak!—wouldn't have Sally—aw—owh—wha—oh, Lord!—to hear of it for a hundred dollars! She said when she agreed for me to sell the cotton, I'd be certain—oh, Lord! I believe I'll die!"

The inebriate fell back on his bed, almost fainting, and Captain Suggs thought he'd try an experiment. Disguising his voice, with his mouth close to the partition, he said,—

"You're a liar! you didn't marry Widow Rugby; your some thief tryin' to pass off for something."

"Who am I then, if I ain't John P. Pullum, that married the widow Sally Rugby, Tom Rugby's widow, old Bill Stearns's only daughter? Oh, Lord! ef it ain't me, who is it? Where's Charley Stone—can't he tell if it's John P. Pullum?"

"No, it ain't you, you lyin' swindler; you ain't got a dollar in the world, and never married no sich widow," said Suggs, still disguising his voice.

"I did—I'll be hanged if I didn't. I know it now; Sally Rugby with the red head, all of the boys said I married her for her money, but it's a—oh, Lord! I'm very ill."

Mr Pullum continued his maudlin talk, half asleep, half awake, for some time; and all the while Captain Suggs was analyzing the man—conjecturing his precise circumstances, his family relations, the probable state of his purse, and the like.

"It's a plain case," he mused, "that the feller married a red-headed widow for her money—no man ever married sich for anything else. It's plain agin, she's got the property settled upon her, or fixed some way, for he talked about her 'agreein' for him to sell the cotton.' I'll bet he's the new feller that's dropped in down thar by Tallassee, that Charley Stone used to know. And I'll bet he's been down to Wetumpka to sell the cotton—got on a bust thar—and now's on another here. He's afeard of his wife too; leastways his voice trembled like it, when he called her red-headed. Pullum! Pullum! Pullum!" Here Suggs studied. "That's surely a Talbot county name—I'll venture on it, anyhow."

Having reached a conclusion, the Captain turned over in bed and composed himself for sleep.

At nine o'clock the next morning, the bar-room of the "Union" contained only Dennis and our friend the Captain. Breakfast was over, and the most of the temporary occupants of the tavern were in the public square. Captain Suggs was watching for Mr Pullum, who had not yet come down to breakfast.

At length an uncertain step was heard on the stairway, and a young man, whose face showed indisputable evidence of a frolic on the previous night, descended. His eyes were blood-shot, and his expression was a mingled one of shame and fear. Captain Suggs walked up to him, as he entered the bar-room, gazed at his face earnestly, and slowly placing his hand on his shoulder, as slowly, and with a stern expression, said,—

"Your—name—is—Pullum!"

"I know it is," said the young man.

"Come this way then," said Suggs, pulling his victim out into the street, and still gazing at him with the look of a stern but affectionate parent. Turning to Dennis as they went out, he said,—

"Have a cup of coffee ready for this young man in fifteen minutes, and his horse by the time he's done drinking it."

Mr Pullum looked confounded, but said nothing, and he and the Captain walked over to a vacant blacksmith's shop across the street, where they could be free from observation.

"You're from Wetumpka last," remarked Suggs with severity, as if his words charged a crime.

"What if I am?" replied Pullum, with an effort to appear bold.

"What's cotton worth?" asked the Captain, with an almost imperceptible wink.

Pullum turned white and stammered out,—

"Seven or eight cents."

"Which will you tell your wife you sold yours—*hers* for?"

John P. turned blue in the face.

"What do you know about my wife?" he asked.

"Never mind about *that*. Was you in the habit of gettin' drunk before you left Talbot county, Georgy?"

"I never lived in Talbot; I was born and raised in Hanis," said Pullum, with something like triumph.

"Close to the line, though," replied Suggs, confidently relying on the fact that there was a large family of Pullums in Talbot; "most of your connections lived in Talbot."

"Well, what of all that?" asked Pullum, with impatience; "what is it to you whar I come from or whar my connection lived?"

"Never mind—I'll show you—no man that married Billy Stearns's daughter can carry on in the way *you've been doin'* without my interferin' for the intrust of the family!"

Suggs said this with an earnestness, a sternness, that completely vanquished Pullum. He tremulously asked,—

"How did you know that I married Stearns's daughter?"

"That's a fact 'most anybody could have known that was intimate with the family in old times. You'd better ask how I knowed that you tuk *your wife's* cotton to Wetumpka—sold it—got on a spree—after Sally give you a caution too—and then came by here, *got on another spree*. What do you reckon Sally will say to you when you get home?"

"She won't know it," replied Pullum; "unless somebody tells her."

"Somebody *will tell her*," said Suggs; "I'm going home with you as soon as you've had breakfast. My poor Sally Rugby shall not be trampled on in this way. I've only got to borrow fifty dollars from some of the boys to make out a couple of thousand. I need to make the last payment on my land. So go over and eat your breakfast quick."

"For God's sake, Sir, don't tell Sally about it; you don't know how unreasonable she is."

Pullum was the incarnation of misery.

"The devil I don't! she bit this piece out of my face," here Suggs pointed to a scar on his cheek, "when I had her on my lap a little girl only five years old. She was always game."

Pullum grew more nervous at this reference to his wife's mettle.

"My dear Sir, I don't even know your name."

"Suggs, Sir—Captain Simon Suggs."

"Well, my dear Captain, ef you'll just let me off this time, I'll lend you the fifty dollars."

"*You'll—lend—me—the—fifty—dollars!* Who asked you for your money, or rather *Sally's* money?"

"I only thought," replied the humble husband of Sally, "that it might be an accommodation. I meant no harm; I know Sally wouldn't mind my lending it to an old friend of the family."

"Well," said Suggs, and here he mused, shutting his eyes, biting his lips, and talking very slowly, "ef I knowed you would do better."

"I'll swear I will," said Pullum.

"No swearin', Sir!" roared Suggs, with a dreadful frown; "no swearin' in *my* presence!"

"No, Sir, I won't any more."

"Ef," continued the Captain, "I *knowed* you'd do better—*go right home*" (the Captain didn't wish Pullum to stay where his stock of information might be increased), "and treat Sally like a wife all the rest of your days, I might, *may be*, borrow the fifty (seein' it's Sally's any way), and let you off this time."

"Ef you will, Captain Suggs, I'll never forget you; I'll think of you all the days of my life."

"I ginnarally makes my mark, so that I'm hard to forget," said the Captain *truthfully*. "Well, turn me over a fifty for a couple of months, and go home."

Mr Pullum handed the money to Suggs, who seemed to receive it reluctantly. He twisted the bill in his fingers, and remarked,—

"I reckon I'd better not take this money; you won't go home and do as you said."

"Yes, I will," said Pullum; "yonder's my horse at the door. I'll start this minute."

The Captain and Pullum returned to the tavern, where the latter swallowed his coffee and paid his bill.

As the young man mounted his horse, Suggs took him affectionately by the hand.

"John," said he, "go home, give my love to cousin Sally, and kiss her for me. Try and do better, John, for the futur'; and ef you have any children, John, bring 'em up in the way of the Lord. Good-bye!"

Captain Suggs now paid *his* bill, and had a balance on hand. He immediately bestrode his faithful "Bill," musing thus as he moved homeward,—

"Every day I git more insight into things. It used to be, I couldn't understand the manna in the wilderness, and the ravens feedin' Elishy; now, it's clear to my eyes. Trust in Providence—that's the lick! Here was I in the wilderness, sorely oppressed, and mighty nigh despar, Pullum come to me, like a 'raven,' in my distress—and a *fat* one, at that! Well, as I've *allers* said, honesty and Providence will never fail to fetch a man out! Jist give me that for a *hand*, and I'll 'stand' agin all creation!"

IV.

THE BIG BEAR OF ARKANSAS.

A STEAM-BOAT on the Mississippi frequently, in making her regular trips, carries between places varying from one to two thousand miles apart; and as these boats advertise to land passengers and freight at "all intermediate landings," the heterogeneous character of the passengers of one of these up-

country boats can scarcely be imagined by one who has never seen it with his own eyes.

Starting from New Orleans in one of these boats, you will find yourself associated with men from every State in the Union, and from every portion of the globe; and a man of observation need not lack for amusement or instruction in such a crowd, if he will take the trouble to read the great book of character so favourably opened before him. Here may be seen jostling together the wealthy Southern planter and the pedlar of tin-ware from New England—the Northern merchant and the Southern jockey—a venerable bishop and a desperate gambler—the land speculator and the honest farmer—professional men of all creeds and characters—Wolvereens, Suckers, Hoosiers, Buck-eyes, and Cornercrackers, beside a “plentiful sprinkling” of the half-horse and half-alligator species of men, who are peculiar to “old Mississippi,” and who appear to gain a livelihood simply by going up and down the river. In the pursuit of pleasure or business I have frequently found myself in such a crowd.

On one occasion, when in New Orleans, I had occasion to take a trip of a few miles up the Mississippi, and I hurried on board the well-known “high-pressure-and-beat-every-thing” steam-boat “Invincible,” just as the last note of the last bell was sounding; and when the confusion and bustle that is natural to a boat’s getting under way had subsided, I discovered that I was associated in as heterogeneous a crowd as was ever got together. As my trip was to be of a few hours’ duration only, I made no endeavours to become acquainted with my fellow-passengers, most of whom would be together many days. Instead of this, I took out of my pocket the “latest paper,” and more critically than usual examined its contents; my fellow-passengers at the same time disposed of themselves in little groups.

While I was thus busily employed in reading, and my companions were more busily still employed in discussing such subjects as suited their humours best, we were startled most unexpectedly by a loud Indian whoop, uttered in the “social hall,” that part of the cabin fitted off for a bar; then was to be heard a loud crowing, which would not have continued to have interested us—such sounds being quite common in that *place of spirits*—had not the hero of these windy accomplishments stuck his head into the cabin and hallooed out, “Hurra for the Big Bar of Arkansaw!” and then might be heard a confused hum of voices, unintelligible, save in such broken sentences as “horse,” “screamer,” “lightning is slow,” &c.

As might have been expected, this continued interruption attracted the attention of every one in the cabin; all conversation dropped, and in the midst of this surprise, the "Big Bar" walked into the cabin, took a chair, put his feet on the stove, and looking back over his shoulder, passed the general and familiar salute of "Strangers, how are you?" He then expressed himself as much at home as if he had been at "the Forks of Cypress," and "perhaps a little more so."

There was something about the intruder that won the heart on sight. He appeared to be a man enjoying perfect health and contentment: his eyes were as sparkling as diamonds, and good-natured to simplicity. Then his perfect confidence in himself was irresistibly droll.

"Perhaps," says he, "gentlemen," running on without a person speaking, "perhaps you have been to New Orleans often; I never made the *first visit before*, and I don't intend to make another in a crow's life. I am thrown away in that ar place, and useless, that ar a fact. Some of the gentlemen thar called me *green*—well, perhaps I am, said I, *but I arn't so at home*; and if I ain't off my trail much, the heads of them perlite chaps themselves wern't much the hardest; for according to my notion, they were *real know-nothings*, green as a pumpkin-vine—couldn't, in farming, I'll bet, raise a crop of turnips: and as for shooting, they'd miss a barn if the door was swinging, and that, too, with the best rifle in the country. And then they talked to me 'bout hunting, and laughed at my calling the principal game in Arkansaw, poker, and high-low-jack.

"'Perhaps,' said I, 'you prefer chickens and rolette;' at this they laughed harder than ever, and asked me if I lived in the woods, and didn't know what *game* was? At this I rather think I laughed. 'Yes,' I roared, and says, 'Strangers, if you'd asked me *how we got our meat* in Arkansaw, I'd a told you at once, and given you a list of varmints that would make a caravan, beginning with the bar, and ending off with the cat; that's *meat* though, not game.'

"Game, indeed, that's what city folks call it; and with them it means chippen-birds and bitterns; may be such trash live in my diggings, but I arn't noticed them yet: a bird any way is too trifling. I never did shoot at but one, and I'd never forgiven myself for that, had it weighed less than forty pounds. I wouldn't draw a rifle on anything less than that; and when I meet with another wild turkey of the same weight I'll drap him."

"A wild turkey weighing forty pounds!" exclaimed twenty voices in the cabin at once.

"Yes, strangers, and wasn't it a whopper? You see, the thing was so fat that it couldn't fly far: and when he fell out of the tree, after I shot him, on striking the ground he burst open, and the way the pound gobs of tallow rolled out of the opening was perfectly beautiful."

"Where did all that happen?" asked a cynical-looking Hoosier.

"Happen! happened in Arkansaw: where else could it have happened, but in the creation State, the finishing-up country—a State where the *sile* runs down to the centre of the 'arth, and Government gives you a title to every inch of it? Then its airs—just breathe them, and they will make you snort like a horse. It's a State without a fault, it is."

"Excepting mosquitoes," cried the Hoosier.

"Well, stranger, except them; for it ar a fact that they are rather *enormous*, and do push themselves in somewhat troublesome. But, stranger, they never stick twice in the same place; and give them a fair chance for a few months, and you will get as much above noticing them as an alligator. They can't hurt my feelings, for they lay under the skin; and I never knew but one case of injury resulting from them, and that was to a Yankee: and they take worse to foreigners, anyhow, than they do to natives. But the way they used that fellow up! first they punched him until he swelled up and busted; then he sup-per-a-ted, as the doctor called it, until he was as raw as beef; then he took the ager, owing to the warm weather, and finally he took a steam-boat, and left the country. He was the only man that ever took mosquitoes at heart that I know of. But mosquitoes is natur, and I never find fault with her. If they ar large, Arkansaw is large, her varmints ar large, her trees ar large, her rivers ar large, and a small mosquito would be of no mor use in Arkansaw than preaching in a cane-brake."

This knock-down argument in favour of big mosquitoes used the Hoosier up, and the logician started on a new track, to explain how numerous bear were in his "diggins," where he represented them to be "about as plenty as blackberries, and a little plentifuler."

Upon the utterance of this assertion, a timid little man near me inquired if the bear in Arkansaw ever attacked the settlers in numbers.

"No," said our hero, warming with the subject, "no, stranger, for you see it ain't the natur of bar to go in droves; but the way they squander about in pairs and single ones is edifying. And then the way I hunt them—the old black rascals know the crack of my gun as well as they know a pig's squealing. They

grow thin in our parts, it frightens them so, and they do take the noise dreadfully, poor things. That gun of mine is a perfect *epidemic among bar*: if not watched closely, it will go off as quick on a warm scent as my dog Bowie-knife will: and then that dog—whew! why the fellow thinks that the world is full of bar, he finds them so easy. It's lucky he don't talk as well as think; for with his natural modesty, if he should suddenly learn how much he is acknowledged to be ahead of all other dogs in the universe, he would be astonished to death in two minutes. Strangers, that dog knows a bar's way as well as a horse-jockey knows a woman's: he always barks at the right time, bites at the exact place, and whips without getting a scratch. I never could tell whether he was made expressly to hunt bar, or whether bar was made expressly for him to hunt: any way, I believe they were ordained to go together as naturally as Squire Jones says a man and woman is, when he moralizes in marrying a couple. In fact, Jones once said, said he,—

“Marriage, according to law, is a civil contract of divine origin; it's common to all countries as well as Arkansaw, and people take to it as naturally as Jim Doggett's Bowie-knife takes to bar.”

“What season of the year do your hunts take place?” inquired a gentlemanly foreigner, who, from some peculiarities of his baggage, I suspected to be an Englishman, on some hunting expedition, probably at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

“The season for bar hunting, stranger,” said the man of Arkansaw, “is generally all the year round, and the hunts take place about as regular. I read in history that varmints have their fat season and their lean season. That is not the case in Arkansaw: feeding as they do upon the *spontaneous* productions of the sile, they have one continued fat season the year round: though in winter, things in this way is rather more greasy than in summer, I must admit. For that reason, bar with us run in warm weather, but in winter they only waddle. Fat, fat! it's an enemy to speed; it tames everything that has plenty of it. I have seen wild turkeys, from its influence, as gentle as chickens. Run a bar in this fat condition, and the way it improves the critter for eating is amazing; it sort of mixes the ile up with the meat, until you can't tell t'other from which. I've done this often. I recollect one perty morning in particular, of putting an old he fellow on the stretch, and considering the weight he carried, he run well. But the dogs soon tired him down, and when I came up with him, wasn't he in a beautiful sweat—I might say fever; and

then to see his tongue sticking out of his mouth a foot, and his sides sinking and opening like a bellows, and his cheeks so fat he couldn't look cross. In this fix I blazed at him, and pitch me naked into a briar patch if the steam didn't come out of the bullet-hole ten foot in a straight line. The fellow, I reckon, was made on the high-pressure system, and the lead sort of bust his biler."

"That column of steam was rather curious, or else the bear must have been *warm*," observed the foreigner, with a laugh.

"Stranger, as you observe, that bar was *warm*, and the blowing off of the steam showed it, and also how hard the varmint had been run. I have no doubt if he had kept on two miles farther, his insides would have been stewed; and I expect to meet with a varmint yet of extra bottom, who will run himself into a skinful of bar's grease: it is possible; much unlikelyer things have happened."

"Whereabouts are these bears so abundant?" inquired the foreigner, with increasing interest.

"Why, stranger, they inhabit the neighbourhood of my settlement, one of the prettiest places on old Mississippi—a perfect location, and no mistake; a place that had some defects, until the river made the 'cut-off' at 'Shirt-tail Bend'; and that remedied the evil, as it brought my cabin on the edge of the river—a great advantage in wet weather, I assure you, as you can now roll a barrel of whiskey into my yard in high water from a boat, as easy as falling off a log. It's a great improvement, as toting it by land in a jug, as I used to do, *evaporated* it too fast, and it became expensive. Just stop with me, stranger, a month or two, or a year, if you like, and you will appreciate my place. I can give you plenty to eat; for, beside hog and hominy, you can have bar-ham and bar-sausages, and a mattress of bar-skins to sleep on, and a wildeat-skin, pulled off hull, stuffed with corn-shucks, for a pillow. That bed would put you to sleep, if you had the rheumatics in every joint in your body. I call that ar bed a *quietus*. Then look at my land—the government ain't got another such a piece to dispose of. Such timber, and such bottom land! why, you can't preserve anything natural you plant in it, unless you pick it young; things thar will grow out of shape so quick. I once planted in those diggins a few potatoes and beets: they took a fine start, and after that an ox-team couldn't have kept them from growing. About that time, I went off to old Kentuck on business, and did not hear from them things in three months, when I accidentally stumbled on a fellow who had stopped at my place, with an idea of buying me out. 'How did you like

things?' said I. 'Pretty well,' said he: 'the cabin is convenient, and the timber land is good; but that bottom land ain't worth the first red cent.' 'Why?' said I. 'Cause,' said he. 'Cause what?' said I. 'Cause it's full of cedar stumps and Indian mounds,' said he, 'and *it can't be cleared*.' 'Lord!' said I, 'them ar "cedar stumps" is beets, and them ar "Indian mounds" ar tater hills.'

"As I expected, the crop was overgrown and useless: the sile is too rich, and *planting in Arkansaw is dangerous*. I had a good-sized sow killed in that same bottom land. The old thief stole an ear of corn, and took it down where she slept at night to eat. Well, she left a grain or two on the ground, and laid down on them: before morning, the corn shot up, and the percussion killed her dead. I don't plant any more: natur intended Arkansaw for a hunting-ground, and I go according to natur."

The questioner who thus elicited the description of our hero's settlement seemed to be perfectly satisfied, and said no more; but the "Big Bar of Arkansaw" rambled on from one thing to another with a volubility perfectly astonishing, occasionally disputing with those around him, particularly with a "live Sucker" from Illinois, who had the daring to say that our Arkansaw friend's stories "smelt rather tall."

In this manner the evening was spent; but, conscious that my own association with so singular a personage would probably end before the morning, I asked him if he would not give me a description of some particular bear-hunt; adding, that I took great interest in such things, though I was no sportsman. The desire seemed to please him, and he squared himself round towards me, saying that he could give me an idea of a bar-hunt that was never beat in this world, or in any other. His manner was so singular, that half of his story consisted in his excellent way of telling it, the great peculiarity of which was, the happy manner he had of emphasizing the prominent parts of his conversation. As near as I can recollect, I have italicized them, and given the story in his own words.

"Stranger," said he, "in bar-hunts *I am numerous*; and which particular one, as you say, I shall tell, puzzles me. There was the old she-devil I shot at the Hurricane last fall—then there was the old hog thief I popped over at the Bloody Crossing, and then—Yes, I have it! I will give you an idea of a hunt, in which the greatest bar was killed that ever lived, *none excepted*; about an old fellow that I hunted, more or less, for two or three years; and if that ain't a *particular bar-hunt*, I ain't got one to tell.

"But, in the first place, stranger, let me say, I am pleased with you, because you ain't ashamed to gain information by asking and listening; and that's what I say to Countess's pups every day when I'm home; and I have got great hopes of them ar pups, because they are continually *nosing* about; and though they stick it sometimes in the wrong place, they gain experience anyhow, and may learn something useful to boot.

"Well, as I was saying about this big bar, you see, when I and some more first settled in our region we were drivin' to hunting naturally: we soon liked it, and after that we found it an easy matter to make the thing our business. One old chap, who had pioneered 'afore us, gave us to understand that we had settled in the right place. He dwelt upon its merits until it was affecting, and showed us, to prove his assertions, more marks on the sassafras-trees than I ever saw on a tavern-door 'lection time. 'Who keeps that ar reckoning?' said I. 'The bar,' said he. 'What for?' said I. 'Can't tell,' said he; 'but so it is: the bar bite the bark and wood too, at the highest point from the ground they can reach; and you can tell by the marks,' said he, 'the length of the bar to an inch.' 'Enough,' said I; 'I've learned something here a'ready, and I'll put it in practice.'

"Well, stranger, just one month from that time I killed a bar, and told its exact length before I measured it, by those very marks; and when I did that, I swelled up considerable—I've been a prouder man ever since. So I went on, larning something every day, until I was reckoned a buster, and allowed to be decidedly the best bar-hunter in my district; and that is a reputation as much harder to earn than to be reckoned first man in Congress, as an iron ramrod is harder than a toad-stool. Did the varmints grow over-cunning by being fooled with by green-horn hunters, and by this means get troublesome, they send for me as a matter of course; and thus I do my own hunting and most of my neighbours'. I walk into the varmints though, and it has become about as much the same to me as drinking. It is told in two sentences—a bar is started, and he is killed. The thing is somewhat monotonous now—I know just how much they will run, where they will tire, how much they will growl, and what a thundering time I will have in getting them home.

"I could give you this history of the chase, with all the particulars at the commencement, I know the signs so well—*Stranger, I'm certain.* Once I met with a match though, and I will tell you about it; for a common hunt would not be worth relating.

"On a fine fall day, long time ago, I was trailing about for bar, and what should I see but fresh marks on the sassafras-trees, about eight inches above any in the forests that I knew of. Says I, 'Them marks is a hoax, or it indicates the d—t bar that was ever grown.' In fact, stranger, I couldn't believe it was real, and I went on. Again I saw the same marks, at the same height, and *I knew the thing lived*. That conviction came home to my soul like an earthquake. Says I, 'Here is something a-purpose for me: that bar is mine, or I give up the hunting business.' The very next morning what should I see but a number of buzzards hovering over my corn-field. 'The rascal has been there,' said I, 'for that sign is certain;' and, sure enough, on examining, I found the bones of what had been as beautiful a hog the day before as was ever raised by a Buck-eye. Then I tracked the critter out of the field to the woods, and all the marks he left behind showed me that he was *the bar*.

"Well, stranger, the first fair chase I ever had with that big critter, I saw him no less than three distinct times at a distance: the dogs run him over eighteen miles and broke down, my horse gave out, and I was as nearly used up as a man can be, made on *my* principle, *which is patent*. Before this adventure, such things were unknown to me as possible; but, strange as it was, that bar got me used to it before I was done with him; for he got so at last, that he would leave me on a long chase *quite easy*. How he did it I never could understand. That a bar runs at all is puzzling; but how this one could tire down and bust up a pack of hounds and a horse that were used to overhauling everything they started after in no time, was past my understanding. Well, stranger, that bar finally got so sassy, that he used to help himself to a hog off my premises whenever he wanted one; the buzzards followed after what he left, and so, between *bar and buzzard*, I rather think I was *out of pork*!

"Well, missing that bar so often took hold of my vitals, and I wasted away. The thing had been carried too far, and it reduced me in flesh faster than an ager. I would see that bar in everything I did: *he hunted me*, and that, too, like a devil, which I began to think he was. While in this fix, I made preparations to give him a last brush, and be done with it. Having completed everything to my satisfaction, I started at sunrise, and to my great joy I discovered from the way the dogs run that they were near him; finding his trail was nothing, for that had become as plain to the pack as a turnpike-road. On we went, and coming to an open country, what

should I see but the bar very leisurely ascending a hill, and the dogs close at his heels, either a match for him this time in speed, or else he did not care to get out of their way—I don't know which. But wasn't he a beauty, though? I loved him like a brother.

"On he went, until he came to a tree, the limbs of which formed a crotch about six feet from the ground. Into this crotch he got and seated himself, the dogs yelling all around it; and there he sat eyeing them as quiet as a pond in low water. A green-horn friend of mine, in company, reached shooting distance before me, and blazed away, hitting the critter in the centre of his forehead. The bar shook his head as the ball struck it, and then walked down from that tree as gently as a lady would from a carriage. 'Twas a beautiful sight to see him do that—he was in such a rage that he seemed to be as little afraid of the dogs as if they had been sucking-pigs; and the dogs warn't slow in making a ring around him at a respectful distance, I tell you; even Bowie-knife, himself, stood off. Then the way his eyes flashed—why the fire of them would have singed a cat's hair; in fact, that bar was in a *wrath all over*. Only one pup came near him, and he was brushed out so totally with the bar's left paw, that he entirely disappeared; and that made the old dogs more cautious still. In the mean time I came up, and taking deliberate aim, as a man should do, at his side, just back of his foreleg, *if my gun did not snap* call me a coward, and I won't take it personal. Yes, stranger, *it snapped*, and I could not find a cap about my person. While in this predicament, I turned round to my fool friend; says I, 'Bill,' says I, 'you're an ass—you're a fool—you might as well have tried to kill that bar by barking the tree under his belly as to have done it by hitting him in the head. Your shot has made a tiger of him, and blast me, if a dog gets killed or wounded when they come to blows, I will stick my knife into your liver, I will—'

"My wrath was up. I had lost my caps, my gun had snapped, the fellow with me had fired at the bar's head, and I expected every moment to see him close in with the dogs and kill a dozen of them at least. In this thing I was mistaken, for the bar leaped over the ring formed by the dogs, and giving a fierce growl, was off—the pack, of course, in full cry after him. The run this time was short, for coming to the edge of a lake the varmint jumped in, and swam to a little island in the lake, which it reached just a moment before the dogs.

"'I'll have him now,' said I, for I had found my caps in the *lining of my coat*—so, rolling a log into the lake, I paddled

myself across to the island, just as the dogs had cornered the bar in a thicket. I rushed up and fired—at the same time the critter leaped over the dogs and came within three feet of me, running like mad; he jumped into the lake, and tried to mount the log I had just deserted, but every time he got half his body on it, it would roll over and send him under; the dogs, too, got around him, and pulled him about, and finally Bowie-knife clenched with him, and they sunk into the lake together. Stranger, about this time I was excited, and I stripped off my coat, drew my knife, and intended to have taken a part with Bowie-knife myself, when the bar rose to the surface. But the varmint staid under—Bowie-knife came up alone, more dead than alive, and with the pack came ashore.

“‘Thank God!’ said I, ‘the old villain has got his deserts at last.’

“Determined to have the body, I cut a grape-vine for a rope, and dove down where I could see the bar in the water, fastened my queer rope to his leg, and fished him with great difficulty ashore. Stranger, may I be chewed to death by young alligators if the thing I looked at wasn’t a *she-bar*, and not the old critter after all. The way matters got mixed on that island was onaccountably curious, and thinking of it made me more than ever convinced that I was hunting the devil himself. I went home that night and took to my bed—the thing was killing me. The entire team of Arkansaw in bar-hunting acknowledged himself used up, and the fact sunk into my feelings like a snagged boat will in the Mississippi. I grew as cross as a bar with two cubs and a sore tail. The thing got out ’mong my neighbours, and I was asked how come on that individ-u-al that never lost a bar when once started? and if that same individ-u-al didn’t wear telescopes when he turned a she-bar, of ordinary size, into an old he one, a little larger than a horse?

“‘Prehaps,’ said I, ‘friends’—getting wrathful—‘prehaps you want to call somebody a liar?’

“‘Oh, no!’ said they, ‘we only heard such things as being rather common of late, but we don’t believe one word of it; oh, no,’—and then they would ride off and laugh like so many hyenas over a dead nigger.

“It was too much, and I determined to catch that bar, go to Texas, or die,—and I made my preparations accordin’. I had the pack shut up and rested. I took my rifle to pieces and iled it. I put caps in every pocket about my person for fear of the lining. I then told my neighbours that on Monday morning—naming the day—I would start *that bar* and bring him home with me, or they might divide my settlement among

them, the owner having disappeared. Well, stranger, on the morning previous to the great day of my hunting expedition, I went into the woods near my house, taking my gun and Bowie-knife along, just *from habit*, and there sitting down also from habit, what should I see, getting over my fence, but *the bar*! Yes, the old varmint was within a hundred yards of me, and the way he walked over *that fence*—stranger, he loomed up like a *black mist*, he seemed so large, and he walked right towards me. I raised myself, took deliberate aim, and fired. Instantly the varmint wheeled, gave a yell, and *walked through the fence* like a falling tree would through a cobweb. I started after, but was tripped up by my inexpressibles, which, either from habit or the excitement of the moment, were about my heels, and before I had really gathered myself up, I heard the old varmint groaning in a thicket near by, like a thousand sinners, and by the time I reached him he was a corpse. Stranger, it took five niggers and myself to put that carcass on a mule's back, and old long-ears waddled under his load as if he was foundered in every leg of his body, and with a common whopper of a bar he would have trotted off and enjoyed himself. 'Twould astonish you to know how big he was: I made a *bed-spread of his skin*, and the way it used to cover my bar-mattress, and leave several feet on each side to tuck up, would have delighted you. It was in fact a creation bar, and if it had lived in Samson's time, and had met him, in a fair fight, it would have licked him in the twinkling of a dice-box. But, stranger, I never liked the way I hunted him, *and missed him*. There is something curious about it, I could never understand,—and I never was satisfied at his giving in so *easy at last*. Perhaps he had heard of my preparations to hunt him the next day, so he jist come in, like Capt. Scott's coon, to save his wind to grunt with in dying; but that ain't likely. My private opinion is, that that bar was an *unkuntable bar*, and *died when his time come*."

When the story was ended, our hero sat some minutes with his auditors in a grave silence; I saw there was a mystery to him connected with the bear whose death he had just related, that had evidently made a strong impression on his mind. It was also evident that there was some superstitious awe connected with the affair,—a feeling common with all "children of the wood," when they meet with anything out of their every-day experience. He was the first one, however, to break the silence, and jumping up, he asked all present to "liquor" before going to bed,—a thing which he did, with a number of companions, evidently to his heart's content.

V.

JOHNNY BEEDLE'S COURTSHIP.

AFTER my sleigh-ride last winter, and the slippery trick I was served by Patty Bean, nobody would suspect me of hankering after the woman again in a hurry. To hear me rave and take on, and rail out against the whole feminine gender, you would have taken it for granted that I should never so much as look at one again, to all eternity. Oh, but I was wicked! "Darn their 'ceitful eyes," says I, "blame their skins, torment their hearts, and drot them to darnation!"

Finally, I took an oath, and swore that if I ever meddled or had any dealings with them again—in the sparkling line I mean—I wish I might be hung and choked. But swearing off from woman, and then going into a meeting-house chockfull of gals, all shining and glistening in their Sunday clothes and clean faces, is like swearing off from liquor and going into a grog-shop—it's all smoke.

I held out and kept firm to my oath for three whole Sundays, forenoons, a'ternoons, and intermissions complete: on the fourth there were strong symptoms of a change of weather. A chap, about my size, was seen on the way to the meeting-house, with a new patent hat on, his head hung by the ears upon a shirt-collar, his cravat had a pudding in it, and branched out in front into a double-bow knot. He carried a straight back and a stiff neck, as a man ought to when he has his best clothes on; and every time he spit, he sprung his body forward like a jack-knife, in order to shoot clear off the ruffles.

Squire Jones's pew is next but two to mine, and when I stand up to prayers, and take my coat-tail under my arm, and turn my back to the minister, I naturally look quite straight at Sally Jones. Now Sally has got a face not to be grinned at in a fog. Indeed, as regards beauty, some folks think she can pull an even yoke with Patty Bean. For my part, I think there is not much boot between them. Anyhow, they are so well matched that they have hated and despised each other like rank poison, ever since they were school-girls.

Squire Jones had got his evening fire on, and set himself down to read the great Bible, when he heard a rap at his door.

"Walk in. Well, John, how der do? Git out, Pompey!"

"Pretty well, I thank you, Squire; and how do you do?"

"Why, so as to be crawling. Ye ugly beast, will ye hold yer yop! Haul up a chair and set down, John."

"How do you do, Mrs Jones?"

"Oh, middlin'. How's yer marm?"

"Don't forget the mat there, Mr Beedle."

This put me in the mind that I had been off soundings several times in the long muddy lane, and my boots were in a sweet pickle.

It was now old Captain Jones's turn, the grandfather, being roused from a doze by the bustle and racket; he opened both his eyes, at first with wonder and astonishment. At last, he began to halloo so loud that you might hear him a mile; for he takes it for granted that everybody is just exactly as deaf as he is.

"Who is it, I say? Who in the world is it?"

Mrs Jones, going close to his ear, screamed out,

"It's Johnny Beedle!"

"Ho, Johnny Beedle; I remember he was one summer at the siege of Boston."

"No, no, father; bless your heart, that was his grandfather, that's been dead and gone this twenty years!"

"Ho! But where does he come from?"

"Daown taown."

"Ho! And what does he foller for a livin'?"

And he did not stop asking questions after this sort, till all the particulars of the Beedle family were published and proclaimed in Mrs Jones's last screech. He then sunk back into his doze again.

The dog stretched himself before one andiron, the cat squat down before the other. Silence came on by degrees, like a calm snow-storm, till nothing was heard but a cricket under the hearth, keeping time with a sappy, yellow-birch forestick. Sally sat up, prim as if she were pinned to the chair-back, her hands crossed genteely upon her lap, and her eyes looking straight into the fire. Mammy Jones tried to straighten herself too, and laid her hands across in her lap. But they would not lay still. It was full twenty-four hours since they had done any work, and they were out of all patience with keeping Sunday. Do what she would to keep them quiet they would bounce up now and then, and go through the motions, in spite of the Fourth Commandment.

For my part, I sat looking very much like a fool. The more I tried to say something, the more my tongue stuck fast. I put my right leg over the left, and said, "Hem!" Then I changed, and put the left over the right. It was no

use, the silence kept coming on thicker and thicker. The drops of sweat began to crawl all over me. I got my eye upon my hat, hanging on a peg, on the road to the door, and then I eyed the door. At this moment, the old Captain all at once sung out:

"Johnny Beedle!"

It sounded like a clap of thunder, and I started right up an end.

"Johnny Beedle, you'll never handle sich a drumstick as your father did, if you live to the age of Methuseler. Ho would toss up his drumstick, and while it was whirlin' in the air, take off a gill er rum, and then ketch it as it come down without losin' a stroke in the tune. What d'ye think of that, ha? But seull your chair round close alongside er me, so you can hear. Now, what have you come arter?"

"I arter? Oh, jist takin' a walk. Pleasant walkin', I guess. I mean, jest to see how ye all do."

"Ho, that's another lie! You've come a courtin', Johnny Beedle; you're a'ter our Sal. Say, now, d'ye want to marry, or only to court?"

This is what I call a choker. Poor Sally made but one jump, and landed in the middle of the kitchen; and then she skulked in the dark corner, till the old man, after laughing himself into a whooping-cough, was put to bed.

Then came apples and cider, and the ice being broke, plenty chat with Mammy Jones about the minister and the "sarmon." I agreed with her to a nicety upon all the points of doctrine, but I had forgot the text and all the heads of the discourse, but six. Then she teased and tormented me to tell who I accounted the best singer in the gallery, that day. But, mum! there was no getting that out of me.

"Praise to the face, is open disgrace," says I, throwing a sly squint at Sally.

At last, Mrs Jones lighted t'other candle, and after charging Sally to look well to the fire, she led the way to bed, and the Squire gathered up his shoes and stockings, and followed.

Sally and I were left sitting a good yard apart, honest measure. For fear of getting tongue-tied again, I set right in, with a steady stream of talk. I told her all the particulars about the weather that was past, and also made some pretty 'cute guesses at what it was like to be in future. At first, I gave a hitch up with my chair at every full stop; then, growing saucy, I repeated it at every comma and semicolon; and at last, it was hitch, hitch, hitch, and I planted myself fast by the side of her.

"I swore, Sally, you looked so plaguy handsome to-day, that I wanted to eat you up!"

"Pshaw! get along you," said she.

My hand had crept along, somehow, upon its fingers, and begun to scrape acquaintance with hers. She sent it home again with a desperate jerk. Try it again—no better luck.

"Why, Miss Jones, you're gettin' upstropulous; a little old-maidish, I guess."

"Hands off is fair play, Mr Beedle."

It is a good sign to find a girl sulky; I knew where the shoe pinched—it was that arse Patty Bean business. So I went to work to persuade her that I had never had any notion after Patty, and to prove it, I fell to running her down at a great rate. Sally could not help chiming in with me; and I rather guess Miss Patty suffered a few. I now not only got hold of her hand without opposition, but managed to slip an arm round her waist. But there was no satisfying me; so I must go to poking out my lips after a buss. I guess I rued it. She fetched me a slap in the face, that made me see stars, and my ears rung like a brass kettle for a quarter of an hour. I was forced to laugh at the joke, tho' out of the wrong side of my mouth, which gave my face something the look of a gridiron. The battle now began in the regular way.

"Ah, Sally, give me a kiss, and ha' done with it, now."

"I won't, so, there: nor tech to—"

"I'll take it, whether or no."

"Do it if you dare!"

And at it we went, rough and tumble. An odd destruction of starch now commenced: the bow of my cravat was squat up in half a shake. At the next bout, smash went shirt-collar; and at the same time, some of the head fastenings gave way, and down came Sally's hair in a flood, like a milldam broke loose, carrying away half a dozen combs. One dig of Sally's elbow, and my blooming ruffles wilted down to a dish-cloth. But she had no time to boast. Soon her neck tackling began to shiver; it parted at the throat, and whorah came a whole school of blue and white beads, scampering and running races, every which way about the floor.

By the hookey, if Sally Jones is not real grit, there's no snakes. She fought fair, however, I must own, and neither tried to bite or scratch; and when she could fight no longer, she yielded handsomely. Her arms fell down by her sides, her head back over her chair, her eyes closed, and there lay her little plump mouth, all in the air. Lord, did ye ever see

a hawk pounce upon a young robin, or a bumble-bee upon a clover-top? I say nothing.

Consarn it, how a buss will crack of a still, frosty night! Mrs Jones was about half-way between asleep and awake.

"There goes my yeast bottle," says she to herself, "burst into twenty hundred pieces; and my bread is all dough agin."

The upshot of the matter is, I fell in love with Sally Jones, head over ears. Every Sunday night, rain or shine, finds me rapping at Squire Jones's door; and twenty times have I been within a hair's breadth of popping the question. But now I have made a final resolve, and if I live till next Sunday night, and I don't get choked in the trial, Sally Jones will hear thunder.

VI.

THE MARRIAGE OF JOHNNY BEEDLE.

SINCE I came out in print about my sleigh-riding, and frolicing, and courting, I have entered into the matrimonial state, and left off dabbling in the newspapers: for a married man has a character to take care of. But folks tease and torment me so much to let 'em know the particulars about my marriage, that I don't know that I had best sit down once for all, and tell the rest of my experience.

When I left off, I believe I was punking up to Sally Jones like all vengeance, and threatening to give her the butt-end of my sentiments, wasn't I? Well, I was as good as my word. The next Sabbath-day I went right to work, after meeting, upon the outer rian, as Deacon Carpenter says, and by sun-down things looked about right. I say nothing; but when I stood up to the glass to finish, and thought of titivating hair and wiskers, and so forth, I saw a little fellow there that looked wicked, and says I, "If Sally Jones knows which side her bread is buttered—but no matter, she shan't say I didn't give a chance."

Well, I went over to the Squire's, pretty well satisfied in my own mind; so, after flattering and crowing about her a little while, I up and shew the cloven foot.

"Sally," says I, "will you take me for better or worser?"

This put her to considering, and I gave a flourishing

about the room, and cut a early-cue with my right foot, as much as to say, "Take your own time."

At last, says she, "I'd as liv's have you as anybody in the world, John, but—I declare I can't."

"You can't, ha! And why?"

"Cause—"

"Cause what?"

"Cause I can't, and that's enough. I would in a minute, John, but for only one reason, and that I'm afraid to tell ye."

"Poh, poh!" says I, "don't be bashful. If there's only one stump in the way, I guess here's a fellow—"

"Well, then, look t'other way, John; I can't speak if you look at me."

"O, yes; there, now's your time," says I, with a flert.

"The reason is—Joe Bowers, the stage-driver. Now, you shan't tell nobody, John, will ye?"

Who would have thought this of Sally Jones!

It seemed to me the very Old Boy had got into the women: they fairly put me to nonplush! All this time my popularity with the ladies was amazing. To see them flattering and soft-soaping me all at once, you would have sworn I had nothing to do but pick and choose. I had as much gallantry to do as I wanted everywhere; and for politeness and gentility I never turned my back to no man. Then they were so thick and familiar with me, that they didn't care what they said or did before me; and, finally, whenever they had errands or chores to, who but I was the favourite bird to fetch and carry? I was for ever and ever racing and cantering from post to pillar, to do their bidding. Rain or shine, snow or mud, nothing stopping me; and, I may say, I fairly earned their smiles by the sweat of my brow. Then it was, "O, Mr Beedle! what should we do without Mr Beedle!" But when I caught one alone, and began to touch upon the matrimonial sentiments, then how quick the tune was changed! O, the ways of women are curious!

Patty Bean was not the first I run against, by a long short. I never lost anything for the want of asking; and I was plaguy apt to talk turky always when I get sociable, if it was only out of politeness. Now and then one would promise, and then fly off at the handle; but most all contrive some reason or other for giving me the bag to hold. One had taken a firm resolve never to marry—"No, never, never!" and the next Sunday morning she was published! Another chicken thought she was a great deal too young to undertake to manage a family. At last, I took a great shine to the

school-marm, Huldah Hornbeam, though she was ten years older than I, and taller by half a yard of neck; and when I offered her heart and hand, she fixed up her mouth, and, says she, "I've a great respect and esteem for you, Mr Beedle, but—" and so forth. Nothing will cool a man quicker than respect and esteem, unless it is a wet blanket. But let Huldah alone, she had her eyes upon Deacon Carpenter all the time.

Well, as I was going moping along home, from Squire Jones's, I fell in with Doctor Dingley. The Doctor saw in a minute that something was the matter, and he went to work and pumped the whole secret out of me. Then he seemed so friendly, that I up and told him all my experience with the women, from the beginning to the end.

"Well, John," says he, "I advise you now to wait till the twenty-ninth of February, when the gals turn round and courted the fellows. It's none of my business, but, I wouldn't let the women make a fool of me any more."

Well, I took a resolution, and I stuck to it firm; for when I once set up my ebenezer, I am just like a mountain. I stuck to it along pretty well into January, when I had to go to singing school. I must go to singing school, for I was leader in treble, and there was no carrying on the parts without me. But this was nothing, if it hadn't fell to my lot to go home with Hannah Peabody, four times running. Politeness before everything. Well, she kept growing prettier and prettier every time, but I only grit my teeth and held on the harder.

By and by, Sabbath-day night came round, and I felt a sort of uneasy, moping about home; and, says I, this resolution will never set well on my stomach without air and exercise; and before I had done thinking of this, I was more than half way to Captain Peabody's. It was about daylight down as I was passing by the kitchen; but hearing a sort of snickering inside, I slipped up and peeped into the window, just out of curiosity.

There was no candle burning, for Mrs Peabody is saving of tallow, but I could see Hannah and Pol Partridge, the help, telling fortunes in the ashes by firelight. I turned round to go off, and run right against Jack Robinson. Jack was come to sit up with the help, and would insist upon it, I should go in and see Hannah—"She hasn't had a spark this month," says he, "and in you shall go, or I'll lick ye."

Well, there was no dodging here, and all I had to do was to grin and bear it. So in I went, and once in, good-bye to resolution. The short and the long of it, I was soon as deep

in the mud as I had been in the mire. But I had another guess chap to deal with than Sally Jones now. And here was now the difference between them. Where you got a slap in the chops from Sal, Hannah kep yo off with a scowl and a cock up of the nose. And Madam couldn't bear handling. With her, it was talk is talk, but hands off, Mister.

But I rather guess I had cut my eye-teeth by this time. If I hadn't learnt something about the nature of the women, the kicks I had taken from all quarters fell upon barren ground. There is no way to deal with them but to coax and flatter; you gain nothing, let me tell ye, by saving of soft soap; and you must be sly about it. It is no way to catch a wicked devil of a colt, in a pasture, to march right up, bridle in hand; you must sort of sidle along as if you was going past, and whistle, and pretend to be looking t'other way; and so round and round, till at last you corner him up; then jump and clench him by the forelock. O! I'm not so great a fool as I might be.

But it was a long tedious business before Hannah and I could come to any sort of understanding. There was old Captain Peabody was a stump in my way. He was a man that had no regard for politeness; he travelled rough-shod through the town, carrying a high head and a stiff upper lip, as much as to say, "I owes nobody nothing, by —." He had been a skipper and sailed his schooner all along ashore, till he had got forehanded; then went back, up country, and set down to farming. But I never tuckle to man, if he's as big as all out-doors. And after he poked his fist in my face one 'lection, we never hitched horses together.

Well as I was afeard to go to the house and court Hannah in the regular way, I had to carry on the war just when and where I could; sometimes of a dark night, I could steal into the kitchen. But my safest plan was, to track her to the neighbour's house, where she went to spend the evenings; skulk about till she started home, then waylay her on the road. Pretty poor chance this, you'll say. But if this wasn't enough, Hannah herself must join in to plague me half to death.

You see I wanted to let her know what I was after in a sort of a delicate underhand way, and keep myself on the safe side of the fence all the time, if there was to be any kicking. But Hannah had no notion of riddles; she would not understand any sort of plain English. I hinted plaguy suspicions about true love, and Cupid's darts, and all that. Then I would breathe a long sithe, and say, "What does

that mean, Hannah?" But no, she couldn't see, poor soul; she looked as simple an' innocent all the while as if butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. She was plaguy close, too, as to her goings and comings; and if she happened any time by accident to let drop the least word that showed me where to find her next time, she was so mad with herself that she was ready to bite her tongue off.

One day she was going to her Aunt Molly's to spend the evening, and she went all the way round to Dr Dingley's to tell Mrs Dingley, not to tell me. "For," says she, "I don't want him to be dodging me about everywhere." Well, Mrs Dingley, she promised to keep dark, but she told the Doctor, and what does the Doctor do, but comes right straight over and tells me, "Gone all stark alone," says he, "but it's none of my business."

This is the day that I have marked with a piece of chalk. Hardly was daylight down before I was snug in my skulking nest, in Aunt Molly's barn. It was on the hay-mow, where there was a knot-hole handy to look through and see all that went in or out of the house. I had a scheme in my head that Hannah little dreamt of; and I lay and I thought it over till she came out; and when I got her under my arm, and walking down the lane, thinks I, I'll set the stone a-rolling anyhow, let it stop where it will.

So I set on to talking about this and that and t'other thing, and happened (by mere chance, you know) to mention our old hatter shop, that stands at the corner, that my father used to work in when he was alive. "And," says I, "speaking of the shop, always puts me in mind of you, Hannah."

"Of me, John?" says she. "Why?"

"O! it's just the thing for a store," says I.

"Well?"

"Sweep out the dirt, and old hat parings, and truck—"

"Well?"

"Take the sign; rub out 'Hatter,' and put in 'Merchant; and that spells 'John Beedle, Merchant—'"

"Well, John?"

"Then get rum and molasses, and salt-fish, and ribbons and calicoes—"

"O!" says she, "it's my new calico gownd you was a-thinking of. Ain't it pretty?"

"Oh!" says I, "'tis a sweet pretty gownd," says I. "But—I finally concluded to set up store and get married, and settle myself down as a merchant for life—"

At this Hannah hung down her head and gave a snicker.

"And how does all that put you in mind of me, John?" says she.

"Guess."

"I won't guess to touch to, so there now—I never!"

What I said, and what she said next, is all lost, for I'll be shot if I can remember. It's all buz, buz, in my head, like a dream. The first thing I knew, we were right again Captain Peabody's barn, walking as close together as we could with comfort, and our arms crossed round each other's waist. Hannah's tongue had got thawed out, and was running like a brook on a freshet, and all one steady stream of honey. I vow, I was ready to jump out of my skin.

It was a mile and a half from Aunt Molly's to Captain Peabody's, and I thought we had been about a minute on the road. So says I, "Hannah, let's go set down under the great apple-tree and have a little chat, just to taper off the evening." We now sat down and began to talk sensible. We settled all the predicaments of the nuptial ceremony, and then talked over the store till we thought we saw ourselves behind the counter; I weighing and measuring, and dickering and dealing out, and she, at the desk, pen in hand, figuring up the accounts. "And mind, John," says she, "I'm not a-going to trust everybody at the corner, I tell ye." But just as we were beginning to get sociable, as I thought, Hannah looks up, and says she, "What can that 'ere great red streak be in the sky, away down there beyend Sacarrap?"

"I rather guess," says I, "it's a fire in the woods."

"Fire in the woods! I'll be skinned if it isn't daylight a-coming. Quick, John, help me into the window before father's a-stirring, or here'll be a pretty how d'ye do."

The next job was to tell the news to Captain Peabody. Hannah had settled it that she should speak to her mother, and said she could manage her well enough, and it was my business to ask her father. This was a thing easier said than done. It stuck in my crop for days, like a raw onion. I tried to persuade Hannah to marry fust, and ask afterwards. Says I, "You are twenty-four, and free according to law." But she wouldn't hear to it. She had no notion of doing anything clandestinely. Then I asked Doctor Dingley to go and break the ice for me. But no: he would not meddle with other folk's business—he made it a point.

"Well," says I, "if I have got to come to the scratch, the less I consider on it the better." So one stormy day I put my head down against a north-easter, and set my feet agoing; and the next thing I was standing right before Captain Peabody. He

was in his grin-house, shelling corn, sitting on a tub, with an old frying-pan stuck through the handles; and he made the cobs fly every which way, hit or miss—he didn't care. But it tickled him so to see me dodge 'em, that he got into uncommon good humour.

"Well, Johnny Beedle, what has bro't you up here, right into the wind's eye, this ere morning?"

"Why, Cap'm, I've got an idea in my head."

"No! how you talk!"

"Ye see, the upshot of the matter is, I've a notion of setting up a store, and getting a wife, and settling myself down as a merchant."

"Whoorah, John, there's two ideas—a store and a wife."

"But I want a little of your help," says I.

"Well, John," says he, "I'll do the handsome thing by ye. If you keep better goods than anybody else, and sell cheaper, you shall have my custom, and welcome, provided you'll take pay in sauce and things. Isn't that fair?"

"O, yes, Cap'm."

"And I wish you success on the other tack. No fear of that, I'll warrant. There's lots of silly girls afloat; and such a fine, taught-rigged gen'man as you are, can run one down in no time."

"O, yes, Cap'm; I have run down Hannah already."

"My Hannah?"

"O, yes, Cap'm; we have agreed, and only want your consent."

With this the old Cap'm riz right up on eend, upset the tub and frying-pan, and pointed with a great red ear of corn in his hand, towards the door, without saying a word; but his eyes rolled like all creation!

This raised my blood, that I felt so stuffy, that I marched right straight off, and never turned my head to the right or left, till I was fairly home and housed.

"Well now," says I, "my apple-cart is upset in good earnest." And when I went to Doctor Dingley for comfort, says he, "John, I wash my hands of this whole affair, from beginning to end. I must support my character. I am a settled doctor in this town; and the character of a doctor, John, is too delicate a flower to go poking round, and dabbling into everybody's mess. Then," says he, "Mrs Dingley, I warn you not to meddle nor make in this business. Let everybody skin their own eels. Hold your tongue, you fool, you. Did you ever hear of me burning my fingers?"

Howsomever, there was some under-hand work carried on

somewhere, and by somebody. I don't tell tales out of school. I had no hand in it, till one day, Dr Dingley, says he, "John, if you happen to be wanting my horse and shay this afternoon about three o'clock, go and take it. I never refused to lend, you know. And I hope Captain Peabody will gain his lawsuit with Deacon Carpenter, that he has gone down to Portland to see to. But that's none of my business."

Somebody, too—I don't say who—there was a certain Squire Darling, living in a certain town, about ten miles off, that did business, and asked no questions. Well, in the said town, just after sundown, a young man, named Joseph Morey, was walking near the meeten-house, with a sort of cream-coloured book under his arm; and he heard something in the woods, this side, that, if it wasn't a hurricane, he'd give up guessing. Such a cracking, and squeaking, and rattling!—such a thrashing, and grunting, and snorting!—you never! He stopped, and looked back, and all soon came to light. There was an old white-faced horse came scrabbling along out of the woods, reeling and foaming, with an old wooded top shay at his tail, and a chap about my size flourishing a small beach-pole, pretty well boomed up at the end. And, says I, "Mister, can you tell me where one Squire Darling lives?"

"Which Squire Darling?" says he; "there's two of the name."

"His name is John," says I.

"Faith," says he, "they are both Johns too; but one is a lawyer, and the other a cooper."

"O, it must be the lawyer that I want," says I.

With this, the young man gave a squint at Hannah, and a wink at me; and "Come along," says he, "I am going right there now, and I'll show you the Squire, and fix things for ye."

"Hannah," says I, "that's lucky."

Well, he carried us into a small, one-storey house, a little further on, full of books and dust, and smelling of strong, old dead tobacco-smoke. Here we sat down, while he went out about our business. We waited and waited, till long after dark, and were glad enough to see him come back at last with a candle. "The Squire is very sick," says he, "but I have over-persuaded him." And the next minute, Squire came grunting along in, all muffled by in a great coat, and spectacles on, and a great tall woman, as witness for the bride.

Well, he went to work, and married us, and followed up with a right down sensible sermon, about multiplying and increasing on the earth; and I never felt so solemn and

serious. Then followed kissing the bride all round, the certificate; and then I gave him two silver dollars, and we got into the shay again, and off.

After this, nothing happened, to speak of, for about a month. Everything was kept snug, and Captain Peabody had no suspicion; but one morning, at break of day, as I was creeping softly down Captain Peabody's back-stairs, with my shoes in my hand, as usual, I trod into a tub of water, standing on the third step from the bottom, and down I came, slam bang. The Captain was going to kill his hogs, and had got up betimes; put his water to heat, and was whetting his butcher-knife in the kitchen.

The first thing I saw, when I looked up, there stood Captain Peabody, with a great butcher-knife in his hand, looking down upon me like a thunder-cloud! I want to know if I didn't feel streaked! He clinched me by the collar, and stood me up; and then raised his knife over me, as far as he could reach. I thought my last moment was come. Blood would have been shed, as sure as rats, if it hadn't been for Mrs Peabody. She stepped up behind, and laid hold of his arm; and says she, "It's no matter, Mr Peabody; they are married."

"Married to that puppy?" roared the Captain.

"Yes, Sir," said I; "and here's the certificate."

And I pulled it out of my jacket-pocket, and gave it to him; but I didn't stay for any more ceremony. As soon as I felt his gripe loosen a little, I slid off like an eel, and backed out-doors, and made track home, about as fast as I could leg it. I was in a constant worry and stew all the forenoon, for fear the Captain would do anything rash; and I could neither sit still nor stand still, eat, drink, or think.

About the middle of the afternoon, Dr Dingley came bouncing in, out of breath, and says he, "John, you have been cheated and bamboozled. Your marriage ain't worth that. It was all a contrivance of Jack Darling, the lawyer, and his two imps, Joe Morey and Peter Scamp." This was all he could say, till he had wiped his face, and taken a swig of cider, to recover his wind; and then he gave me all the particulars.

When Captain Peabody had read my certificate, he could not rest, but tackled up, and drove right down, to let off his fury upon his old friend, Squire Darling. The moment he got sight of the Squire, he turned to and called him all the foul names he could lay his tongue to, for half an hour.

The Squire denied everything. The Captain downed the

certificate, and says he, "There's black and white against ye, you bloody old sculpen."

The Squire knew the hand-writing was his nephew's, as soon as he saw it, and the truth was brought to light; but as the storm fell in one quarter, it rose from the other. Squire Darling had smelt tar in his day, and hadn't forgot how to box the compass; and as soon as the saddle was on the right horse, he set in and gave the Captain his own back again, and let him have it about nor-nor-west, right in his teeth, till he was fairly blown out. They shook hands then, and seeing Hannah and I had got under-weight together, they said we must go to the Vice, and no time must be lost in making all fast in the lashings, with a good, fine square knot, before a change in the weather. So the Squire slicked up a little, got into the shay and came home with the Captain, to hold the wedding that very night.

How Dr Dingley happened to be in town just at the time I don't know. It was his luck; and as soon as he saw which way the wind was, he licked up and cantered home in a hurry. After he had got through with the particulars, says he, "Now, Mr Beedle, it's none of my business; but if I had such a hitch upon Captain Peabody, I would hang back like a stone dray, till he agreed to back my note for two hundred dollars, in the Portland Bank, to buy goods with, enough to set you up in the store."

I thought strong on this idea, as I was going over to Captain Peabody's; but the moment I shew the least symptoms of packing, such a storm was raised as never was seen. Father, and mother-in-law, and Squire Darling, set up such a yell altogether; and, poor Hannah, she sat down and cried. My heart failed me, and I made haste to give in and plead sorry, as quick as possible; and somehow, in my hurry, I let out that Dr Dingley had set me on; and so was the innocent cause of his getting a most righteous licking, the first time Captain Peabody caught him. It wasn't settled short of thirty dollars.

Well, Squire Darling stood us up, and married us about right, and here was an end of trouble. Mother-in-law would not part with Hannah, and she made father-in-law give us a settling out in the north end of his house. He could not stomach me very well for a while, but I have managed to get on the blind side of him. I turned right in to work on his farm, as steady and industrious as a cart-horse. And I kept on pleasing him in one way and another, more and more, till he has taken such a liking to me, that he wouldn't part with

me for a cow. He owns that I save him the hire of a help—out and out—the year round.

There—now I have done. I can't patronise the newspapers any more. I have enough to do that is more profitable about home. Betwixt hard work in the fields, and chores about house and barn, and hog pens, I can't call a minute my own, summer nor winter. And just so sartain as my wife sees me come in and set down to take a little comfort, just so sartain is she to come right up and give me a baby to hold.

Noty Binny. The stories that are going the rounds, from mouth to mouth, about my fust marriage, are all packs of lies, invented by Joe Morey and Peter Scamp, jest to make folk laugh at my expense.

VII.

JOHNNY BEEDLE'S THANKSGIVING.

"I SAYS," says I, "Hannah, sposin we keep thanksgivin' to home this year," says I, "and invite all our hull grist o' cousins, and aunts and things—go the hull figure, and do the thing genteel."

"Well, agreed," says she, "it's just what I was a thinkin', only I consate we'd better not cackliate too fur ahead, for I didn't never no it to miss somethin' happenin' so sure as I laid out for the leastest thing. Though it's as good a time now, far's I know, as any—for I've just weanen Moses, and tend to take comfort a spell, 'cause a troublesomer cryiner critter niver come into life."

"Exactly so," says I, "and if I'd a known everything afore I was married that I do now," says I—

"Hold your tongue for a goney, Johnny Beedle," says she, "and mind your thanksgivin'."

"Poh!" says I, "Hannah, don't be miffy; I was only jeestin'—and you jist go and put on a kittle of water, and I'll go out and stick a pig for you; two if you like." So away I went and murdered the pigs out o' love and good-will to Hannah. I rather guess the critters wished I warn't so good-natured.

Well, things went on swimmingly, and what was best of all, we had the luck to invite the minister and deacon afore anybody got a chance; for the very moment the proklamation

was read, I watched for 'em comin' out of meeting, and nailed 'em both. But as I was a tellin', Hannah, she went at it—she got some of her galls to help her, and they made all smoke. In the first place she went to work reg'lar, and turned the house inside out, and then t'other side in again, all the same as darnin' a stocking. Hannah is a smart willin' gall, and a rael worker, and a prime cook into the bargain; let her alone in the doughnut line, and for pumpkin pies—lick! So the day afore the thanksgivin' she called me into the t'other room, that Marm Peabody christened the parlour, to see what a lot o' pies and cakes, and sausage-meat and doughnuts she'd got made up, and charged me not to lay the weight of my finger upon one on 'em. I telled her I guessed she cackelated to call in the whole parish, paupers and all, to eat up sich a sight of vittles; so I grabbed a handful of doughnuts, and went out to feed the hogs, and to see to things in the field. I was gone all the fore part o' the day, and when I went home I found Hannah all hoity toity, in a livin' pucker cryin', and taken on to kill, and poor little Moses tottling arter her and cryin' too. I declare if I didn't feel streaked.

"What in the name o' natur," says I, "is the matter? who's dead, and what's to pay now?"

With that she fetched a new screech, and down she whopped into a cheer.

"Johnny Beedle, Johnny," says she, and with that she boohood agin.

"What ails the woman?" says I, "are you possest, or what?"

"The child is ruined!" says she, "Moses Beedle is ruined."

I kitched up the child, and turned him cend for cend, every which way, but I couldn't see nothin' extraordinary. I begun to think that the woman was bewitched, and by this time was a good mind to feel mad. I don't know of nothin' that'll raise a feller's dander quicker than to skeer him out of his seven senses. So I giv Hannah a reg'lar breezin', for actin' so like a raven distracted bed bug; and what with jarrin' a spell and coaxin' a spell, at last I got the whole on't out of her.

It appears that about an hour or thereabouts arter I'd gone out, there was a man rid up to the door a horseback, got down, and come in and asked for a drink o' water or beer, I ain't sartain which—but anyhow he was a rael dandified chap, and dreadful civel spoken withal. So my wife and

he soon got into a chat about the weather and sich things. Well, while he set, the young one squalled in the room; he'd been asleep, you know, with his mornin's nap; my wife went and fetched him into the room, and she observed that the man looked considerable hard at him, as if he see'd somethin' queer; tho' she didn't think nothin' of it at the time, but recollected arterwards.

She was quite tickled to see the man take him and set him on his knee; but while he was a playin' with him—for Moses is a raal peeler, he ain't afeared of the biggest stranger that ever was—directly he fell to pawin' about his head in sich a comical style, and talking to himself, and withal acted so curious, that Hannah got skeery, and went to take him away, but he wouldn't let her take him just then; he said, "he wanted to examine his head."

"His head!" says Hannah, "nothin' ails his head."

"Nothin' ails it?" says he, "why it's the most remarkable head that I've ever seen." And then he went on with sich a string of long words, there was no memberin' or understandin' half—then he clapped his hand on the side of the little fellow's sconece-box, "there," says he, "do you see that *divilupment*;" or some sich word that sounded awful.

"That's what?" says Hannah.

"Vulgarly called a bump," continued he.

"It ain't a bump too, nyther," says his mother. "It's his nat'rul shape."

"No doubt of that," said the villin.

"Well now, if ever I heard the beat o' that," says she "that bump's come nat'rul."

So he told her they was only called bumps, 'cause they looked like 'em; and the bigger they were, and the more there was on 'em, the more different sorts of capacities and idees folks had—and so on.

At first she thought the man was stark mad; but he seemed entirely harmless, and so she let him go on with his stuff, and somehow he e'en almost persuaded her it was all gospel. He said little Moses had got the bump of destruction to an all-fired degree, tho' it was in the mother's power to help it considerable. But when Hannah asked him if sho must swathe up his head he snorted right out; and then went on to say, that Moses had jist got sich a shaped head as the man had that was hung down to Boston last September. He finally talked her into a livin' fidget—polite as a stage-driver, all the time too, and so larnt, besides, that Hannah couldn't do nothin' but paraphrase. So arter he'd drank a

quart o' beer, and Hannah cut a mince-pie for him, he cleared, leaving Hannah in such a stew, that kept workin' up and workin' up till she heered me comin' into the house, and then it all burst out to once'. A tempestical time there was, I tell you.

Now by the time Hannah had finished her lockrum, you may depend I was in an almighty passion; and it was amazin' lucky for the feller that he was out of arm's length that minit. Put then I understood it all better than she, for I'd seen, in two prints, pieces about Franology or Cranology, or some such stuff that seemed to explain to my mind what the feller meant. But poor Hannah don't get much time to read newspapers, so that she hadn't hearn a word. No wonder she took the man for a crazy critter.

Yet, somehow, when I looked at Moses, I couldn't help consatin' that his head looked sort o' queer, tho' I wouldn't say nothin' nyther; but, says I, "Hannah, look here, that feller that's been treatin' you to sich a rigmarole of nonsense is a rotten fool, and you're another. If iver I should light 'pon him, I gess I would give his head a bump that would save him from the gallows. All is, if you think anything is the matter with the young one, why I'll go arter the doctor, and that'll settle it."

"Do, John," says she.

So off I starts for Doctor Eldrich; but by the time I got to the house, I begun to think what a tarnation goose I was to go on such a tomfool's arrent. By good luck, howsomever, the doctor was out; so I jist left word for him to come to our house in the course iv the day, if he had nothin' else to do.

Thinks I, as I trudged back, here's an end to thanksgiving. Well, to rights, Doctor Hosannah Eldrich, he's a deacon of our church, and sings thro' his nose a few. I declare, when I see him ridin' up the lane I couldn't help feelin' like a thunderin' calf; so I jist made excuse to split up some kindlin', and left Hannah to give him the chapter and the varse. Our wood-house is short of a mile from the house; but I could hear the doctor's haw-haw clear out there. So I dropped axe, and in I went. S'niver the Doctor see me he giv' me a hunch.

"Ain't yew a pretty considerable queer chap," sez he, "to send for me on such a beautiful bizness as this?" With that he haw-haw'd agin; and my wife she laughed till she cried, jist to see the figer the Doctor cut, for he's as long as the moral law, and couldn't stand up for laughin'.

Then I laughed tu, till the house rung: luckily our nearest neighbour lives a half a mile off, and is stone deaf into the bargain. So I tipt the wink to Hannah, and tell'd Hosannah 'twas all a joke of our'n to send for him (for I thought I should look corner-ways and skwywoniky if he should tell the company about us next day. Besides, I know'd the Deacon liked a joke pretty well, even if he got rubbed sometimes). So, says I, "How did Hannah carry it out?" "Consume it if he didn't jump right into the trap."

"Capital! capital!" said he, "Botheration, if I didn't think she was in real earnest!"

VIII.

AUNT NABBY'S STEWED GOOSE.

It was my Aunt Nabby's birthday, and she was bent upon having a stewed goose, stewed in onions, and with cabbage and salt pork to match.

"Polljah," said she to me, "ain't we got a goose 'bout the farm?"

"No," said I, "we eat the old gander a Christmas, and he was the last of the patriarchs."

Aunt Nabby went down to Sue, who was getting breakfast.

"Susanna," said she, "the boy tells how we ain't got a goose in creation. Now what shall we do?"

"Go without," replied Susanna, with that amiable tone which father said had worn off her teeth to the gums.

But Aunt Nabby was bent upon a goose, and when such a stiff and straight person gets bent upon anything you may consider the matter settled, and I saw that a goose of some kind would be had at some rate or other.

"Here, you crittur," cried Aunt Nabby to the little black specimen of the human family which was digging potatoes in the garden, "here, I want you to go along to the neighbours, and borra a goose." Cato laid down his hoe, got over the fence, and shovelled off on his broad pedestals to get a goose.

The first house that Cato came to was that of Sam Soap, the tailor, commonly called Soft Soap. Into the shop went the Yankeeified negro, and making a leg to Mr Soap, who sat like a Hindoo idol, busily employed in patching an old blue coat with still older brown rags, and humming most mourn-

fully the air of "Ye banks and braes of bonny Doon," giving it a nasal twang that came direct from Jedediah Soap, who was a member of the Long Parliament.

"Soap," says Cato, "you haan't got ne goose, nor nothin', haan't ye, for Aunt Nabby?"

Soap was a literal (not literary) man, who as he called his daughter Propriety, and having but one eye, was likewise called Justice, that is by some that were classical. "Priety," says he, "gin Cato the largest goose."

Priety, like a good girl, went into the other room, and arter some time returned with one, well enveloped and carefully wrapped up in paper, telling Cato to be as caretul as everlasting not to get it wet; and away went the web-footed mortal to deliver his charge to Susanna.

"My gracious!" said Sue, "if that are niggard ain't brought me a tough feller to stew!"

But nevertheless, as her business was to stew the goose and ask no questions, at it she went, and pretty soon the tailor's treasure was simmering among onions, and carrots, and cabbages, and turnips, and spices, all as nice as need be. After breakfast, Aunt Nabby had gone abroad to ask in the neighbours, and when she came home, she went of course directly into the kitchen to see how the goose came on.

"Is it tender, Susanna?" said she.

Susanna smiled so sweetly, that the old house-clock in the corner next the cupboard stopped and held up its hand. "Oh, Ma'am," replied Susanna, "it's so tender, that I guess it won't be the more tender arter being biled."

"And fat?"

"Oh, bless you! it's so broad across the back."

My aunt's mouth watered so, that she was forced to look at Susanna, to correct the agreeable impression.

Well, noon came and the neighbours began to drop in. First came the parson, who being a man of vast punctuality, took out his watch as soon as he came in, and for the purpose of seeing how it chimed, as he said, with the old clock, walked into the kitchen, bade Miss Susanna good day, hoped she continued well in body, and snuffed up the sweet flavours of the preparing sacrifice with expanded nostrils. Next to the Minister came the Squire, he opened the front door, and seeing no one but me, "Polljah," he said, "when 'ill that are goose be done? 'cause I'm everlastin' busy, settlin' that hay-mow case, and I'd like to know—"

"Ready now, Squire," answered the Parson, opening the

kitchen-door; "and I guess it's an uncommon fine one too, so walk in and let's have a chat."

The Squire entered, and he and the Minister had a considerable spell of conversation about the hay-mow case. The case was this: Abijah Biggs got leave to carry his hay across Widow Stokes's field to the road; well, this hay-mow had dropped off the poles, and Widow Stokes claimed it as a waif and stray.

"Now," says the Squire, "I conceit the chief pint in the case is this here; has Widow Stokes a right to this hay? Now this 'll depend, ye see, 'pon t'other point, to wit, *videlicet*, does the hay belong to Bijah? Now the Widow says, says she, 'every man in this country's free, and therefore every man in this country is a king, jist as far as his farm goes. Now the king, all allow, has a right to waifs and strays; and so,' says Widow Stokes, 'that are hay is mine.' 'But,' says Bijah—and by jinks, it's a cute argument; 'but,' says he, 'tho' every man in this land of liberty is a free man, yet that doesn't prove that every woman is, and *per contra*, we know that women don't vote, and of course ain't free; so,' says he, 'the Widow Stokes ain't a king; so,' says he, 'the hay ain't hern.' But's a puzzlin' case, ain't it?"

"Well, now," answered the minister, "it strikes me that hay ain't astray."

"Well," said the Squire, "there's a pint I never thinked of."

Just then in came the Deacon, and after him the sexton, and so on till pretty much all the aristocratic democracy of the village had assembled. And then in bustled Aunt Nabby, awful fine I tell you; and then Susanna and Cato began to bring in dinner. And while they were doing that, the company all took a stiff glass of grog by way of appetite, and then stroked down their faces and looked at the table, and there was a pig roast and stuffed, and a line of veal, and two old hens, and an everlastin' sight of all kinds of sarce, and pies, and puddins, and doughnuts, and cider, and above all, at the head of the table, the dish in which lay the hero of the day—that are goose, smothered in onions, and utterly hid beneath the load of carrots and cabbages. The seat next the goose was assigned to the Minister, and all sat down.

The Squire flourished his fork, and pounced upon the pig; The Deacon he tacked to at the veal, while the sexton went seriously to work to exinume a piece of pork from amid an avalanche of beans. The Minister, with a spoon, gently stirred away a few carrots and onions, in hopes of thus coming at the goose.

"It smells remarkably fine," says he, to Aunt Nabby.

"It's particularly fine and tender," says she; "I picked it myself from a whole heap."

And still the Minister poked, till at last his spoon grated upon a hard surface.

"A skewer, I guess!" and plunging his fork into the onion mass, he struggled to raise the iron handle with which he had joined issue.

"Bless me," cried Aunt Nabby, "what's that are?"

"I should judge," said the Squire, "that are was an old goose."

"Gracious me!" exclaimed the Deacon.

Still the Minister struggled, and still the goose resisted. Aunt Nabby grew nervous, and the more the Minister struggled, the more the goose would not come. I saw my Aunt's eye dilating, her hand moved ugly, and then pounce, just when the Minister thought he had conquered the enemy, my Aunt drove the round steel through the onions into the eye of the skewer as she thought, and dragging forth the tailor's goose, held it at arm's length before the company. The Squire had just raised the pig upon his fork, when seeing my Aunt's discovery, he dropped it and the dish was knocked all to smash. The sexton had drawn his beans to the edge of the table, another pull as he saw the goose, and over it went. My Aunt dropped the cause of all this evil, and there went another plate. The company dined elsewhere, and the next Sunday the Minister declined preachin', on account of a domestic misfortin. My Aunt Nabby died soon arter, and the sexton buried her, observing as he did so, that she departed, the poor critter, in consequence of an iron goose, and broken crockery!

IX.

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE CITY OF DOGTOWN.

DOGTOWN is a beautiful place, in the interior of this State. There is plenty of land around it, so that nothing can hinder it from growing in every direction, and thus becoming a great city. In fact, Dogtown has already a one-storey church, part of a school-house, and an elegant pound. Nobody can see Dogtown without being reminded of that celebrated town in France, named Grandville, of which we have the following description:

Grandville, grand vilain,
Une église et un moulin
Voilà Grandville tout à plein.

Which we may translate thus :

Grandville, great Grandville,
Has a meeting-house and mill,
Nothing else in all Grandville.

Dogtown is finely and advantageously situated. It stands on Eel River, a stream of water which runs into another stream, and that into a third, which runs into Connecticut River, which running into Long Island Sound, finally reaches the Atlantic. Who does not see, therefore, that Dogtown may become a great sea-port ?

The territory in the neighbourhood of Dogtown is remarkable for its fertility, bating that part of it which is covered with rocks, the salt meadow, the pine woods, the clay-ponds, and the swamps. It is past a doubt, therefore, that the territory, if well cleared, drained, peopled, and cultivated, would become a perfect garden, abounding with the richest productions of nature, and affording a mine of wealth to the country. As to the facilities of communication with the great Atlantic cities and commercial marts, they are admirable.

Dogtown has Boston on one side, and New York on the other. Montreal and Quebec are in the north, while in the east is the rich and thriving State of Maine, with Bangor and Owl's Head to boot. Rail-roads can be made to connect Dogtown with all these places, and they will certainly form such a connection, *wh they are built*. That the place will be a great focus of traue, when this is done, nobody, I think, will deny.

The neighbourhood of Dogtown has all the advantages that can be desired in a young country. There will be as many large towns within thirty miles of the place, as people choose to build. The population cannot fail to increase rapidly, for a man can get married for seventy-five cents, town clerk's fees included. The attraction for settlers must, therefore, be considered very great.

The Dogtowners are remarkably industrious, for they get a living, although constantly grumbling of hard times. They are moreover ingenious, for they manufacture axe-handles, wooden bowls, birch brooms, and white oak cheese, and invent mouse-traps and washing machines. Last of all, the inhabitants of Dogtown are literary and intellectual; for they

talk a great deal of the march of improvement, and the minister and the lawyer take the "Penny Magazine" between them.

All these attractions together, form a combination truly wonderful; but the reader will be astonished when I inform him, that the inhabitants of this favoured spot lived a great many years without the smallest suspicion of what I have been describing. They thought very little of themselves, or of the town they lived in, and continued to vegetate from year to year without imagining they were better off than other folks. In fact, the world might have continued to this day in utter ignorance that Dogtown was such a wonderful place, but for an accident—an accident I call it—for the Dogtowners having lived for so many years without opening their eyes, the fact that they *did* open them of a sudden, on a certain day, in the year of grace 1834, must be considered purely accidental. Some people are inclined to ascribe it to the approach of the comet, which had a powerful influence in opening people's eyes, to say nothing of its effect in driving them stark mad. But that is neither here nor there. The people of Dogtown opened their eyes, and *saw*; that was enough: they saw in an instant their immense advantages, and were astonished that they never had seen them before. They saw their advantages, I say, and were determined to turn them to account.

Straightway Dogtown was all alive: everybody was confident that Dogtown must become a great place; and as everybody told everybody else so, there was no doubt about the matter. Every man went to buying land who could pay for it; and those who could not pay, bought upon credit, sure of selling it at ten times the cost within the year. Nothing was talked of but the immense advantages of the place. The riches of Dogtown were indeed immense; and how they could have been overlooked so long, was a mystery that no one could understand. The land within the limits of the town was computed at seven hundred and twenty million square feet, which, at only one cent per square foot, which is cheap enough in all conscience, would amount to seven million two hundred thousand dollars. What a sum! But this was not all. Half of this land was covered with trees, at the rate of one tree to every five feet square, or quadrangle of twenty-five feet: this gave a computation of ten million four hundred thousand trees; and as each tree, on an average, contained seventy-five cubic feet of timber, it followed that there was actually within the town seven hundred and eighty million

feet of timber, worth, on the lowest calculation, five cents per foot, which would amount to thirty-nine million dollars. This, added to the value of the land, as above, made a grand total of *forty-six millions two hundred thousand dollars!*

The mention of these sums almost drove the good people of Dogtown distracted with joy; they could hardly believe their eyes or ears, but there it was in black and white; figures could not lie. They were amazed to think of their own stupidity and that of their ancestors in letting forty-six millions two hundred thousand dollars lie totally idle and unproductive; but they were determined not to allow their wealth to be neglected any longer. A grand scheme of speculation and improvement was started, and all rushed headlong into it. Every man in Dogtown was now rich, or, what was the same thing, was sure of being so before long. Immense tracts were laid out in building lots, and speculators flocked in from all quarters; from Catsville and Weazletown and Buzzardborough, and Ganderfield and Crow Corner and Upper Bugbury and East Punkinton, and Black Swamp and the Bottomless Bogs. Such a busy time as the Dogtowners had of it! Nothing was talked of but buying land, building houses, laying out roads, streets, squares, avenues, railroads, canals, &c. &c. &c. People left off ploughing and hoeing, because agriculture was too slow a method of making money; for who would think of raising turnips to sell, at twenty cents a bushel, when he could make a hundred times the profit by speculating in land?

First of all, it was determined that Dogtown should be a city. The want of population was found to be a serious obstacle here; the constitution of the State requires ten or twelve thousand inhabitants for a city: and as Dogtown, including the suburbs of Puppyville and Skunk's Misery, contained a population of only six hundred and thirty-one, it was thought there might be some difficulty in getting a charter without anticipating the returns of the next census. However, a city it must be, some time or other, in this all were agreed, and it might as well have the name first as last, so they concluded to *call* it a city. It is astonishing what a spirit of enterprise these prospects infused into the people of Dogtown. The school-house door was painted green; uncle Joe Stubbins mended the top of his chimney; and it was voted in town-meeting to purchase three wheelbarrows for the public use;—and all in consequence of these projected improvements. Nay, so widely did their views of business expand, that Aminidab Figgins, the grocer, deter-

mined to give up retailing, and declared he wouldn't split crackers nor cut candles any longer.

Such was the thriving condition of the City of Dogtown when I left the place in the autumn of that year. I continued to hear of it through the medium of the Dogtown Daily Advertiser, a newspaper established there by an enterprising printer from Connecticut at the first dawning of the commercial prosperity of the city. It appeared to go ahead rapidly. The newspaper spoke of the Exchange, the Town Hall, the Bank, the New Post Office, the Railroad, Canal, &c. House lots were advertised in Washington Square, Merchants Row, State Street, Market Street, &c. Contracts were proposed for building churches, manufactories, &c. This was Dogtown in all its glory.

Last August I determined to make a visit to this celebrated place, in order to feast my eyes with the splendour of a city that had sprung up as it were by enchantment. When I reached the foot of Blueberry Hill, which overlooks the whole place, I walked eagerly to the top, in order to catch a view, at a single glance, of the city in all its magnificence. To my utter astonishment, instead of spires and domes, I saw nothing but Deacon Stumpy's old mansion, with five other ragged and dingy-looking edifices, which stood exactly where I had always known them. I entered the city through State Street, but discovered nothing new except a small house without a chimney. Not a living thing was to be seen in Washington Square, but three geese, who were lazily picking a mouthful of grass among the mud-puddles. I inquired for the Exchange, and found it in use by the Deacon as a cow-pen. The new church, however, I was told had actually proceeded as far as the raising of the timbers; but it was subsequently sold by auction to pay for digging the cellar.

I had a cheque upon the Dogtown Bank for three dollars, and wishing to draw the money, I was directed to No. 19, Tremont Street. This turned out to be the identical building formerly occupied by old Kit Cobble, the shoemaker. It was bank hours, but the bank was shut, and there was not a soul to be seen. Just as I was going away, I spied a tin horn by the door, with a paper hanging over it, on which was written, "Persons having business at the bank, are requested to blow the horn." I put the horn to my lips and blew a blast both long and loud. After waiting about ten minutes, I spied Isaac Thumper coming slowly down the road: he proved to be cashier of the Dogtown Bank, and after some difficulty I convinced him of the safety of cashing the cheque.

Upon inquiring of Isaac what use had been made of the forty-six millions two hundred thousand dollars, he informed me that most of it remained invested in notes of hand. Money was scarce, and was expected to continue so until the onion crop had been got in. It was easy to see that the city had sadly declined from its meridian splendour. In fact, Dogtown has suffered a complete downfall, for hardly anybody now speaks of it as a city. They have as much land as ever, and so long as it continued to be valued at their own price, they were as rich as Jews; but, unfortunately, it fell in value the moment they expected the purchasers to pay for it. The Dogtowners are poor enough at present, but they are not the first, and probably will not be the last people who have ruined themselves by building a city on speculation.

X.

THE COON-HUNT; OR, A FENCY COUNTRY.

'Tis really astonishin' what a monstrous sight of mischief there is in a pint of rum! If one of 'em was to be submitted to an analization, as the doctors call it, it would be found to contain all manner of devilment that ever entered the hed of man, from cussin' and stealin', up to murder and whippin' his own mother, and nonsense enuff to turn all the men in the world out of their senses. If a man's got any badness in him, it'll bring it out, jest as sassafras-tea does the measles, and if he's a good-for-nothin' sort of a feller, without no bad traits in pertikeler, it'll bring out all his greenness. It affects different people in different ways—it makes some men monstrous brave and full of fight, and some it makes cowards; some it makes rich and happy, and some poor and miserable; and it has a different effect on different people's eyes—some it makes see double, and some it makes so blind that they can't tell themselves from a side of bacon. One of the worst cases of rum-foolery that I've heard of for a long time tuk place in Pineville last fall.

Bill Sweeney and Tom Culpepper is the two greatest old coveys in our settlement for 'coon-huntin'. The fact is they don't do much of anything else, and when *they* can't ketch nothin' you may depend 'coons is scarce. Well one night they had everything reddy for a regular hunt, but owin' to

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some extra good fortin' Tom had got a pocket-pistol, as he called it, of reglar old Jimmakey, to keep off the rumatics. After takin' a good startin' horn, they went out on their hunt, with their lite-wood torch a-blazin', and the dogs a-barkin' and yelpin' like forty thousand. Ev'ry now and then stoppin' to wait for the dogs, they would drink one another's helth, till they begun to feel very comfortable, and chatted away 'bout one thing and another, without mindin' much which way they was gwine. Bime-by they cum to a fence. Well, over they got, 'thout much difficulty.

"Who's fence is this?" ses Bill.

"Taint no matter," ses Tom, "let's take suthin' to drink."

After takin' a drink they went on, wonderin' what on yearth had cum of the dogs. Next thing they cum to was a terrible muddy branch. After pullin' through the briers and gettin' on t'other side, they tuck another drink, and after gwine a little ways they cum to another branch, and a little further they cum to another fence—a monstrous high one this time.

"Whar upon yearth is we got to, Culpepper?" ses Bill, "I never seed sich a heap of branches and fences in these parts."

"Why," ses Tom, "it's all old Sturlin's doins—you know he's always bildin' fences and making infernal improvements, as he calls 'em. But never mind, we's through them now."

"Guess we is," ses Bill; "here's the all-firedest tall fence yet."

Shure enuff, thar they was right agin another fence. By this time, they begun to be considerable tired and limber in the gints, and it was sich a terrible high fence!—Tom drapped the last piece of the torch, and thar they was in the dark.

"Now you is done it," ses Bill.

Tom know'd he had, but he thought it was no use to grieve over spilled milk, so ses he, "Never mind, old hoss, cum a-head, and I'll take you out," and the next minit kerslash he went into the water.

Bill hung on to the fence with both hands, like he thought it was slewin' round to throw him off.

"Hellow, Tom!" ses he, "whar in the world is you got to?"

"Here I is," ses Tom, spoutin' the water out of his mouth, and coffin' like he'd swallowed something. "Look out, thar's another branch here."

"Name o' sense, whar is we?" ses Bill. "If this isn't a feney country, dad fetch my buttons."

"Yes, and a branchy one, too!" ses Tom; "and the highest, and deepest, and thickest that I ever seed in my born days."

"Which way is you?" ses Bill.

"Here, rite over the branch."

The next minit in Bill went, up to his middlo in the branch.

"Cum a-head," ses Tom "let's go home."

"Cum thunder! in such a place as this, whar a man hain't more'n got his cote tail unhitched from a fence, fore he's over his head and ears in the water."

After gettin' out and feelin' about in the dark a little, they got together agin. After takin' another drink, they sot out for home, denouncein' the fences and the branches, and helpin' one another up now and then; but they hadn't got more'n twenty yards fore they brung up all standin' in the middle of another branch. After gettin' thro' the branch and gwine about ten steps, they was brung to a halt by another fence.

"Dad blame my pictur," ses Bill, "if I don't think we is bewitched. Who upon yearth would bild fences all over creation this way?"

It was but a ower's job to get over this one; but after they got on the top, they found the ground on t'other side 'thout much trouble. This time the bottle was broke, and they come monstrous near having a fight about the catastrophe. But it was a very good thing, it was; for, after crossin' two or three more branches, and climbin' as many more fences, it got to be daylight, and they found out that they *had been climbin' the same fence all night*, not more'n a hundred yards from whar they first cum to it.

Bill Sweeney ses he can't account for it no other way but that the lieker sort o' turned their heads; and he says he does really believe, if it hadn't gin out, they'd been climbin' the same fence, and wadin' the same branch, till yet. Bill promised his wife to jine the Temperance Society, if she won't never say no more 'bout that coon-hunt.

XI.

A RIDE WITH OLD KIT KUNKER.

Our old friend, Kit Kunker, as he put us to bed on the night of a big frolic at his house, exacted a promise that we would visit him again, shortly thereafter; promising us, on his part, that he would ride all over the settlement with us; and more especially, that he would go with us to the house of Jim Kent, whose sister, Beek, was so ugly "that the flies wouldn't light on her face," and about whose going to mill, he assured me, there was a very pleasant story to be told.

Poor old Kit! But the other day we saw him—and how altered by the lapse of a few years! His head has become white, his figure more bent, and his laughing old face—merry still!—was furrowed with an hundred additional wrinkles. His eye, too, was dull—had lost the twinkle that used so mischievously to light up his countenance. And then, too, he walked with a staff; and when he went to mount "Fiddler Bill," he said, "Help me, Squire," instead of vaulting into the saddle, as of yore! "Thank you, Squire. God bless your Union heart—old Hickory and the Union for ever! I'm gittin' old now, Squire, and can't git about like I used to"—the old man sighed—"Fiddler Bill is old too—notice how gray his face is—we're all gittin' old—yer Aunt Hetty as well's the rest; and God bless yer soul, Squire," (here the old man warmed into animation), "*she's uglier than ever—uglier than the devil*—he! he! ya! ya! It's wuth while coming, jist to take a look at her! With that old long bonnet on"—here the old fellow bent down on his horse's neck, in a paroxysm of laughter—"he! he! hea! ya! ya! and her mouth skrooteched up, ya! ya! the go-to-meetin' way; I'll be cust, ef she ain't so bad to look at, it's enuff to fotch sickness in the family! But," he added, wiping the tears from his eyes, "Squire, I'm old now, yer Aunt Hetty's old and Fiddler Bill is old—all old! old! old! Ah, me!"

But we are digressing. It was of our Ride with old Kit, in 1840, that we began to write—and not of his chattering in 1849.

We went to old Kit's house on the day appointed, at a very early hour, and found the old fellow waiting for us, with "Fiddler Bill" hitched at the gate.

"You can't see yer Aunt Hetty, Squire," he said, "for she's laid up with a pain in her jaw. It's swelled mighty bad

eny how, and makes her look so much better, 'twouldn't be no curiosity to see her now—so we may as well ride. Another time when she's at herself—and her 'ugly' out in *full bloom*, I'll show her to you—he! he! yah! That bonnet o' hern, too, hit's some. 'Tain't like nothin' ever growed, except the baskets the Injin wimmin makes to tote their young ones in!" And the old rascal laughed at his wife and her bonnet, until the woods rang again.

Walking our horses leisurely along the road leading down the creek to the river, Uncle Kit, tapping his steed lightly across the neck with his switch, began, as he had promised, to tell us how he obtained him.

"You see, Squire, me and my Jim was a haulin' a load of whiskey up from Wetumpky, in the spring of '36, and we had a mighty dull old horse under the saddle. The like of him never was on the yeth for hard trottin'. He was *powerful* hard. You've set and watched a saw-mill gate jerk up and down, havn't you—up and down, up and down, like it was goin' into fits? Well, *that was his motion adzactly*. Ses Jim, one day, 'Daddy, I'm gwine to swop 'old Hoss' off, fust chance I git.' Ses I, 'Nobody's fool enough to give you anything better'n an old cow for him.' Ses he, 'You'll see.' Well twa'rn't long afore we ketcht up with a traveller—it was in the piney woods 'twixt Oakfuskee and Dudleyville—walkin' and leadin' his horse, which was Fiddler Bill. I'll tell you, Squire,"—old Kit raised his voice and gesticulated vehemently—"he was a horse then—none o' your little grays—as Homer Hinds ses—but a reg'lar horse, with head and legs like a deer, a body like a barrel, and put up like a jack-screw. He was jist risin' four year old, fat, and hilt his head *like the Queen of Sheby!*"

"So Jim bantered the stranger purty quick for a swap—but fust we found out he was walkin' bekase he was afeared of his horse. He was a Norrud raised man and talked mighty proper—he said his horse was 'very rested'—which you might see he had been layin' by corn and fodder for some time—and had throwed him and disculpated his shoulder a'most! Then he axed us about the Injuns—this was jist afore the infernal devils began their devilment, and the thing had leaked out and was talked of, all over the country—and Jim seein' he was *afeared of them* too, let on like they was mighty thick and hostile in them woods.

"'Stranger,' says he, 'what would you do ef you was to see a red-skin peepin' from behind that big pine yonder—and you afeared o' your horse?'

"'God only knows,' ses the Yanky.

"'Well now I'll tell you,' ses Jim, '*thar's* a crittur under that saddle'—p'intin' to 'old Hoss'—'that could take you outen the way like goose-grease! How'll you trade?'

"The Yanky let on like he tho't his horse was the most vallyble, but Jim out-talked him to deth. He praised old one, 'twell I had to go behind the wagin and laugh. Bime-by ses he, 'ain't that a *Injun holler*?' and with that the stranger looked white, and axed Jim how *he'd* trade?

"'You must give me ten dollars to boot,' ses Jim.

"'But my horse is the most vallyble,' ses the Yanky.

"'He ain't half-broke,' ses Jim, 'and I'd be most afear'd to ride him—let's see!'

"With that Jim gits on the roan, and tetch'd him in the flank with the heel that was on t'other side from the stranger, and the horse bein' naterally playful, you see, went to kickin' up and rearin' and squealin'; Jim holdin' on to the mane, and the Yanky hollerin' 'wo! wo!' Presently Jim come to the ground, ca-whop! And with that he riz from the ground, complainin' mighty 'bout his side, and 'lowed he wouldn't have the horse on no terms—that ef the Injuns was to come on us of a sudden, we shouldn't have but one horse that could be rid; and then he axed me ef I had enny opydildock in the wagin box, that he could rub his side with! he! he! Jim *is* a rascal, that's a fac, but I can't tell whar he got it from, unless it's a judgment on his mammy for bein' so cussed ugly! yah! yah!

"Seein' the stranger was aggravated 'bout the Injuns, I draps in then, myself, and tells him I'd give him 'old Coon,' even drag, for the roan; and we made the trade mighty quick, for he had the Injun ager 'twell his eyes was big as sassers! Well, we changed saddles and bridles, and while I was gearin' up Fiddler Bill, he couldn't—but, Squire, what *do* you reckon it was he couldn't do?"

"Can't guess," we replied.

"Well, bust me wide open, *ef he knowed how to put the bridle on his horse!* I've seen men that was ig'nant before, but he was the wust off with it I *ever* seed. He didn't know whether the bits went behind the years, or into the mouth—blamed ef he did!

"Finally, at last, he got mounted, and jogged off—you remember what I told you 'bout the saw-mill gate—well that's the way old Cuss rattled his buttons. He was the most *lone-some-lookin'* critter, a-settin' on that old horse, with his new saddle and bridle, that ever I seed! As soon as he got cleverly

out o' sight, Jim gin two or three Injun whoops, and people did say in Dudleyville, whar he stopped that night, that he got thar in mighty reasonable good time! So that's the way, Squire, I come by Fiddler Bill—ain't it, Bill?" whereupon Fiddler pricked up his ears, but said nothing.

About this time we arrived at a mean-looking shanty, and were answered by a man who came out to us. It was Jim Blake.

"Here's the *sensis*-taker," said Uncle Kit.

"Hang the *sensis*-taker," was the blunt reply.

"Don't say that, Jim," returned Uncle Kit; "he's a good little Union Squire Mr Van Buren's sent round to take 'count of the cloth and chickens, jist to see ef the wimmin's sprightly."

"I don't care a dried apple for him nor Mr Van Buren nother," said Mr Blake; "Mr Van Buren is gittin' too cussed smart, enny way—my opinion is, he's a *measly hog*!"

"Son! son!" exclaimed old Kit, deprecatingly, "don't talk that way. Van Buren's the *Union* President, and old Hickory says he'll do!"

"I don't care who says he'll do—I'm gwine to vote for Harrison—see ef I don't!"

Uncle Kit was struck dumb, and after obtaining a list of the family with much difficulty, we rode away.

"Squire," said the old man, after a long silence, "that fellow's talk goes to my heart. *A little more, and he'd a cussed old Hickory!* and ef he *had*, I'd a tore his liver out!"

Old Kit was highly excited—he continued:

"To think that a boy I've raised in a manner, that I've told all about old Hickory, and the Union, and New Orleans, and the Horse-Shoe, should 'a turned round and come to be a *Nullifier*! Ain't thar no way," he asked, as if musing, "we could fix to git that poor fool boy straight agin?"

We soon got into the thickest of the Union Creek settlement, and from house to house, through the Smiths, the Hearnss, the Folsoms, the Narons, the Dabbsses and the Rollinses, Uncle Kit carried us with a speed that was most gratifying. He joked the old women, kissed the girls and fondled the children; and where the slightest indisposition was manifested to give the desired information, he settled the difficulty at once, by the magic words, "Union—old Hickory."

"It's a blessed thing, Squire," he said, "to have a man's friends all of the right sort. Here's my people that I brought from Georgy—confound that boy Blake, I'll give him a reg'lar talk next Sunday; and ef that don't do I'll make his wife quit him—all my people, as I was sayin', love the Union and vote

like one man! I tell you, it's old Union Crick that keeps the Nullifiers down in Tallapoosy!"

As Old Kit was indulging in these pleasant reflections and remarks we reached the ford of the creek, where we were to cross to get into the river settlement.

"Right here," said the old man, as we reached the middle of the stream, "was where Becky Kent ketched it; but she lives right up thar, a piece, and I'll see ef I can't devil her into tellin' you 'bout it. She's as old and as ugly—mighty nigh—as yer Aunt Hetty; but she has a mighty notion of courtin', and ef you'll sidle up to her, it'll please her so well, her tongue will git to goin', and she couldn't hold that story back ef she wanted to."

A very few minutes brought us to the residence of Mr James Kent, the brother of the spinster Becky. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately for our heart—the presiding goddess was not at home; and having made the proper entries on our books, from information furnished by Mr Kent, we again mounted and pursued our way.

"Did you see," asked Uncle Kit, "that old snuff-bottle and them nasty breshes, stickin' in the cracks of the logs? Well, it's on the 'count of sich that Becky got in the crick that time. I'll tell you 'bout it myself, 'long as we didn't see her."

"See, I had allers 'cused Becky of snuff, but the lyin' heifer never would own to it. So one day, as I was ridin', 'long the road, t'other side of the crick, I hearn a noise betwixt the bray of the jack and the squeal of the pea-fowl, and in a minit I knowed it was somebody in distress—so I hurried on. When I got to the crick, what should it be but scrawny Becky Kent, settin' on a bag o' corn, on her old blind horse, and him a standin' stock-still in the middle of the ford."

"'Becky,' ses I, 'what in natur are you doin' thar? Why don't you come along out?'"

"Ses she, '*I can't*—don't you see how I'm fixed?'"

"Then I looked more pertickler, and seed how 'twas. The horse had stopped to drink, and Becky had let go the bridle, and when she tried to git it agin, the bag slipped further over to the side she *warn't* a settin' on—so when I got thar, she had let all go *but the bag*, and she was a settin' on one eend o' that, leanin' forward, and with her hands behind her, one to each side o' the bag, a pullin' agin the weight of the big eend, 'twell her face was as red as a gobbler's snout. 'Twas a reg'lar *dead strain*—the weight of Beck and the *little* eend of the bag,

agin the *big eend*—and, I tell you, she had to lean *well* forward to keep from goin' over backwards!

"I bulged into the crick and got purty close to Becky; but it was so funny, I couldn't fetch myself to help her, but tho't I'd devil hur a little, as she set. So ses I, making a fine bow:

"My honey, my love,
My turkle-dove,
Will you take it amiss,
Ef I give you a kiss?"

"But I hadn't no idee of kissin' of her—but only wanted to devil her a little. At last, I seen an old mustard-bottle stickin' from out her bosom; and ses I, Miss Becky, will you give your Uncle Kit a pinch of snuff?' Ses she, 'help me for the Lord's sake—I'm mighty nigh gin out'—and, Squire, she was on a *tremenjus* strain! But I tho't I'd plague her some: and after cutting of some few shines, I made a motion to snatch at the bottle o' snuff! She gin a little jerk back!—the *big eend* got a start!—still she hilt her grip with both hands'—and the next thing, *someethin' riz in the air, like a small cloud of calico and dry corn-stalks!* and the durndest *ca-slosh* on t'other side o' the horse, that ever you heerd! A—WAUGH! *What sloshin'!*"

"Horraw, Becky! rise, gall! I was lookin' t'other way!' ses I, *for I knowed she was 'shamed!* I laughed, however, and she *mighty nigh* cussed!

"Oh! you're a sweet little *mare-maid* now,' ses I.

"You're a drotted old hog,' ses she.

"My honey, my love, my turkle-dove; don't git mad with yer Uncle Kit,' ses I; but it all wouldn't do, and the heiffer never got in a good humour with me 'twell I met her in the road one Sunday, and persuaded her I was goin' to send Jim to see her."

"Did you send him?"

"Yes, and the fust thing the fool said to her was, *he'd a gin his years to 'a seen her somerset that time, in the crick!* he! he! yah! yah! That busted things to pieces again, and me and Becky ain't more'n half friendly now."

After going through the entire settlement with great ease and celerity—thanks to Uncle Kit's assistance—we took the back-track to Mr Kuncker's. It was quite dark when we arrived. As Uncle Kit threw down our saddles in his poreh, said he, "Come in, and we'll take a sip of *branch-water*. Hello! old woman—is yer face swelled *enny better* yet?—Here's the Squire—the little blessed Union Squire—

come to see you! Ef you can't git out a bed to come yerself, make one of the gals fetch yer *old bonnet* out—that'll be *some amusement!* Walk in, Squire, and take a seat in yer old Union Uncle's house!"

XII.

SETH WILLET: THE ELK COUNTY WITNESS.

IN the spring of 1845, after the close of a long, tiresome session of the Pennsylvania Legislature, the writer was invited by Colonel A——, then Clerk of the House of Representatives, to accompany him to his home in the backwoods of Elk—a new county, that had been partitioned off from Jefferson, Clearfield, and McRea, that session. The object of the visit was twofold; first, to enjoy the fine trout fishing of that prolific region; and secondly, to assist the Colonel in getting the seat of justice where he wanted it.

The Colonel owned a mill and store at Caledonia, on one edge of the county, and a very fine mill at Ridgeway, but was not inclined to pay anything for it, as Mr John Ridgeway, a millionaire of Philadelphia, owned nearly all the land about it, and the county seat would greatly increase its value. My friend's plan was to put in strong for Caledonia; and he did. He offered to build the court-house and gaol, and gave bonds therefore, if Caledonia should be chosen.

Ridgeway became frightened, and made a similar proposition for his town; which was of course accepted by the commissioners, who were all personal friends of the Colonel.

It was long before the *ruse* was discovered, and Ridgeway found he was sold.

One day the Colonel and myself rode over to Caledonia to see how things flourished there, and eat some of Aunt Sally Warner's pumpkin pies and venison steaks; and on arriving at the store found a justice's court in full blast. The suit grew out of a lumber speculation; and as near as I could tell by the testimony of the witnesses generally, the matter stood about six for one, a half-dozen for the other. One of the parties was a man of considerable ready cash, while the other was not worth a continental dime. Harris, the man of means, had not been long in these parts, and little was known of him except what had dropped from Seth Willet

one night at Warner's store. He was rather in for it at the time; but enough was said to make the good people of Elk form a bad opinion of Harris.

As the time of the trial drew nigh, some who were in the store when Seth was "blowing" about Harris, began to try to recollect what he said, and the other party in the case was informed that he had a first-rate witness in the green lumberman, as Seth was generally called.

Seth was forthwith waited upon, and pumped by a young man named Winslow, who acted as attorney for the prosecutor. All the information he possessed of Harris was freely and unsuspectingly given, and Winslow noted it down as correctly as he could.

The day previous to the trial the prosecutor and Harris met at the store.

"Well, you're goin' on with the law-suit, I s'pose?" asked Harris.

"Tu be sure I am; and I'll make you smell cotton."

"Bah!" said Harris; "you can't touch bottom."

"Tech bottom? Ca—ant hey? Jest you wait till I git Seth Wilet on the stand, an' swore on the Bible, and see if I ca—ant. P'raps I ha'nt heer'd nothin' about them sheep over to Tiog county, and the robbin' of Jenkinse's store, down tu Painted Post, hey?"

"What are you talking about?" asked Harris, apparently perfectly in a fog as to the purport of the language he had heard.

"I know, an' that's 'nuff;" said the plaintiff, "but let's licker, rnyheow."

Harris lost no time in finding out Seth.

"Did you ever live in Tioga county?"

"Anything about sheep—?"

"No, no, I mean Painted Post."

"Oh! Jenkinse's store!" said Seth, with great gravity.

"Two hundred wouldn't be a bad pile, Seth, here in Elk?"

"No—o, t'wouldn't, that's a fact. Get that amount tu lend on a slow note?"

"Well, I might scrape it up—could give you a hundred down, and the rest after the Court's adjourned."

Harris counted out the hundred, and rolling it up, held it temptingly in his hand. Seth's eyes stuck out like peeled onions, and his mouth fairly watered at the display. It was more money than he had ever owned in his life.

"Have you ever heard that I steal sheep in Tioga county, Seth?"

"Not's I know on."

"You're sure? mind you'll have to swear in Court."

Seth looked at Harris, and then at the bills.

"Sure—perfectly sure."

"Nor anything about my being implicated in the robbery of Jenkins's store?" Still holding the roll of bills in his hand, and turning over the ends, exhibiting the V's and X's most tantalizingly.

"No; I'll swear I never heeard nobody say you had anything to do with it."

"You're an honest man, Seth; here's a hundred on account. The other hundred you shall have after the Court."

The Court had been in session some time, when the Colonel and myself arrived, and Seth had just been sworn. He was to destroy the character of Harris, by testifying in regard to the sheep-stealing, and the robbery at Painted Post.

"Han't no knowledge on the pint."

"Have you never heard, while living at Painted Post, that he was suspected of being engaged in the robbery?"

"I do-no. I never take no notice about what people say *suspiciously* about their neighbours."

"Really you're a very singular witness. Let me jog your memory a little. Do you remember having said anything about Harris's connection with the Tioga sheep stealing, and the Jenkins's store robbery, while you were at Gillis's store one night last April?"

"As fer's my reck'lection serves, I ha—ant."

"Were you at Gillis's store on the night of the 17th of April?"

"I do-no for sartin."

"Were you in Ridgeway at all on the 17th of April?"

"Yeeas, I was."

"How do you fix the time? Proceed, and tell the justice, (we shall get at the truth of this story yet," aside to the plaintiff), "Come, Sir, proceed, Sir."

"Wall, on the mornin' of the 17th, Dickson says he to me, says he, 'Seth, go down to Mr Dill's, and get the nails clenched in the brown mare's off hind foot.' So I jist put a halter on an' cantered down to Ridgeway, and stopt tu Gilleses' store, an' bort some thread an' needles for Ant Jerusha, an' Gilleses' clark ast me ef I wouldn't like to taste sum new rum he had jest got up from Bellefonte, an' I said, 'Yis,' an' he poured out abeout have a tumbler, an' I drinkt it right down."

"Well, Sir, go on."

"Well, then I led the brown mare over tu Dill's, an ast Miss Dill—"

"You mean Mrs Dill, his wife?"

"Yess, Miss Dill. I ast Miss Dill ef Mr Dill was tu hum, an' she sed,

"No, he's down tu the lick b'low Andrewses' mill, arter deer. What you want?" says she.

"I want to get the nails clenched to the mare's off hind foot," sez I.

"Wal,' sez she, 'can't you du it yerself?"

"Wal,' says I, 'I guess I can.'

"So she showed me whar the horse-nails war, an' giv' me the hammer, an' I put on Dill's leather apron, an' at it I went. I got in three nails right snug, and clenched them, an' was drivin' down the third, when the mare shied at suthen, and shoved her foot a one side, an' the hammer cum down caslap! right on this there thumb-nail. You see" (holding it up) "it's not growed out yit."

"But what has that to do with the talk at Gillis's store?"

"I'm goin' on tu tell you. Lor! heow I did yel! you'd a thought thar was fifty painters about. Miss Dill, she cum a-runnin' out, an' ast what was the matter.

"Look here," sez I, holdin' up my thumb, which was bleedin' like all Jehu. 'What shall I do?' sez I.

"I'll tell you what," says Miss Dill, an' she run an' got a leaf of live-for-ever, an' sez she, 'peel off the skin, an' put the peth on.'

"Peel it yerself," sez I, a-cryin' with the exhuberant pain.

"So she peeled it and tied it on, an' in tu days thar wan't a bit of soreness in it; but the nail cum off."

"But come to Gillis's store. What did you say about Harris that night?"

"Wal, all I recollect is, that Thompson an' a lot of fellers was thar; an' Thompson and I shot at a mark for whiskey, an' Thompson he win, and we drinkt at my expense. Then Bill Gallagher and Dill they shot, an' Dill beat Bill an' we drinkt at his expense. Then Charley Gillis he shot agin Frank Souther, an' Frank win; and we drinkt at Charley's expense; an' then Frank he sung a song, an' then Thompson he sung a song; and the next I recollect was—"

"Well, Sir, was what?"

"Why, I waked up next mornin' on Gillis' counter the sickest critter yu ever see. I didn't get over that spree for tu long weeks."

"Well, is that all you have to say?"

"All I recollect at present. If I think of any more, I'll come in an' tell ye."

"You may go, Sir."

Harris won the suit.

XIII.

THE TWO FAT SALS.

If every man were to relate the little romances of love in which he becomes involved, at some time or other of his life, novelists or farce-writers would be supplied with plots and incidents enough to supply publishers and managers with a continual run of novelties for all times.

In the story of the "Two Fat Sals" is recorded the experience of one man only, but it affords a very useful lesson on the evils of a mind divided in the matter of love, and another illustrious example of the truth of the aphorism, that "the course of true love never did run smooth."

"There was two Sals livin' in our town—Sal Stebbins and Sal Babit; real corn-fed gals, I swow. Sal Stebbins would lift a barrel of cider out of the eend of a cart as quick as any other feller, and drink it tew. Sal Babit, she was so fat, she'd roll one way jest as easy as t'other, and if anything, a little *easier*. Well, there was a corn-husking, and I went along with Sal Stebbins: there was all the gals and boys settin' round, and I got sot down so near Sal Babit, that I'll be darned if I didn't kiss her afore I know'd what I was abed at. Sal Stebbins, she blushed: the blood rushed right up into her hair: she was the best *red* critter I ever did see. I thought it was all up with me, and sure enough it was, for when I asked her if she would go hum with me, she said:

"No; you needn't trouble yourself nothin' 'tall 'bout it."

"Well, if you're mind to get spunky, I guess I can get a gal that will let me see her hum. Sal Babit, shall I go hum with you?"

"Well," says she, "I don't mind if you dew."

"After that, Sal Stebbins married a feller in our town, by the name of *Post*,—blind in one eye, and deaf in one ear,—jest to spite me, nothin' else: so I thought if she was a mind to take a feller that couldn't see or hear any tew well,

I'd better let her slide: so I went away from hum, and was gone about three—four—five years?—yes, jest about five years, 'cause I know when I got back she had four little *Posts*. I went to see how she got along. She asked me to come in and set down; so I tuck a cheer and squatted; then she took another cheer and squatted; and we both squatted there together. Her young ones was all runnin' reound on the floor: she pinto to them, and said, in a sort of bragging way,

"You see them, don't you?"

"Yes," says I, squintin' up one eye, 'I see, they're all jest like their daddy, blind in one eye.'

"She was bilin' dumplings at the time, and as soon as sho see me shut up one eye, she out with a hot dumplin', and let me have it in t'other, which made me shut it up a darn'd sight quicker than I ever did afore, and I haint been in love since that time."

XIV.

WAR'S YURE HOSS?

SOME years since, when the State of Missouri was considered "Far West," there lived on the bank of the river of the same name of the State, a substantial farmer, who, by years of toil, had accumulated a tolerable pretty pile of castings; owing, as he said, principally to the fact that he didn't raise much taters and unyuns, but rite smart of corn. This farmer, hearing that good land was much cheaper farther south, concluded to move there. Accordingly, he provided his eldest son with a good horse, and a sufficiency of the needful to defray his travelling and contingent expenses, and instructed him to purchase two hundred acres of good land, at the lowest possible price, and return immediately home. The next day Jeems started for Arkansas, and after an absence of some six weeks, returned home.

"Well, Jeems," said the old man, "how'd you find land in Arkensaw?"

"Tolerable cheap, dad."

"You didn't buy mor'n two hundred acres, did yu, Jeems?"

"No, dad, not *over* tu hundred, *I reckon*."

"How much money hev yu got left?"

"Nary red, dad; cleaned rite out!"

"Why, I had no idee travellin' was so 'sponsive in them parts, Jeems."

"Wal, just you try it wonst, an' you'll find out, I reckon."

"Wal, never mind that, let's hear 'bout the land, an'—*but war's yure hoss?*"

"Why, yu see, dad, I was a goin' along one day—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Yu hole on, dad, an' I'll tell yu all 'bout it. Yu see, I was agoin' along one day, an' I met a feller as said he was goin' my way tu—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Dod darn mi hide, ef yu don't shut up, dad, I'll never git tu the hoss. Wal, as we was both goin' the same way, me an' this feller jined cumpenny, an' 'bout noon, we hitched our critters, an' set down aside uv a branch, and t to eatin' a snack. Arter we'd got thru, this feller sez tu me, 'Try a drap uv this ere red-eye, stranger.' 'Wal, I don't mind,' sez I—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Kummin' tu him bime-by, dad. So me an' this feller sot thar, sorter torkin' an' drinkin', an' then he sez, 'Stranger, let's play a leetle game uv Seven-up,' a takin' out uv his poeket a greasy, roun'-cornered deek uv *kerds*. 'Don'r keer ef I du,' sez I. So we sot up side uv a stump, and kum-menced tu bet a quarter up, an' I was a *slayin' him orful*—"

"But *war's yure hoss?*"

"Kummin' tu him, dad. Bime-by, luck changed, an' he got tu winnin', an' pretty sune I hadn't not nary nuther doller. Then sez he, 'Stranger, I'll gin yu a chance to git even, an' play yu one more game.' Wal, we both plaid rite tite that game, I sware, an' we was both six an' six, an'—"

"*War's yure hoss?*"

"Kummin' tu him, dad. We was six an' six, dad, an' 'twas his deal—"

"Will yu tell me *war's yure hoss?*" said the old man, getting riled.

"Yes, we was six an' six, an' he turned up the Jack!"

"*War's yure hoss?*"

"The stranger won him, a-turnin' that Jack!"

XV.

BOB LEE.

A TALE.

IN a remote region of the Hoosac Mountains is a little place called Turkeytown. It is a straggling assemblage of dingy, old-fashioned houses surrounded by the woods, and the inhabitants are as old-fashioned as their dwellings. They raise corn and pumpkins, believe in witches, and know nothing of railroads or the march of intellect. There has never been more than one pair of boots in the town: these are called "the town boots," and are provided at the public expense, to be worn to Boston every winter by the representative. I had the satisfaction last week of actually seeing these venerable coriaceous integuments in official duty upon the long shanks of Colonel Crabapple of the General Court, and was struck with becoming awe at their veteran looks. They seemed to be somewhat the worse for wear, but the Colonel informed me the town had lately voted to have them heel-tapped, and the vote would probably be carried into effect before the next session.

The present story, however, is not about boots, but about Bob Lee, who was an odd sort of a fellow, that lived upon the skirts of Turkeytown, and got his living by hook and by crook. He had neither chick nor child, but kept a bachelor's hall in a ricketty old house, without any companion except an old black hen, whom he kept to amuse him because she had a most unearthly mode of cackling that nobody could understand. Bob used to spend his time in shooting wild ducks, trapping foxes and musquashes, catching pigeons, and other vagabond and aboriginal occupations, by means of which he contrived to keep his pot boiling, and a ragged jacket upon his back. Nothing could induce him to work hard and lay up something for a rainy day. Bob left the rainy days to take care of themselves, and thought of nothing but sunshine. In short, the incorrigible vagabond was as lazy, careless, ragged, and happy as any man you ever saw of a summer's day.

And it fell upon a summer's day, that Bob found himself without a cent in his pocket or a morsel of victuals in the house. His whole disposable wealth consisted of a single fox-skin nailed against his back door, drying in the sun. Something must

be had for dinner, and Bob took down the fox-skin, and set off for Deacon Grabbit's store to sell it. As luck would have it, before he had gone a quarter of a mile he met old Tim Twist, the Connecticut pedlar, a crony and boon companion of many years' standing. Tim, who was glad to see his old gossip, invited him into Major Shute's tavern to take a glass of New-England. Bob, who had never signed the temperance pledge, accepted the invitation nothing loth. They sat down over half a pint, and discussed the news. No drink tastes better than that which a man gets for nothing. It was a hot day, and both were very thirsty. Tim was very liberal for a Connecticut man. What will you have? In the upshot they found they had made an immense potation of it; and Bob took leave of his old friend, clearly satisfied that he had not taken so heavy a pull for many a day.

He had hardly got out of sight of the tavern before he found the road too crooked to travel; he sat down under an apple-tree to take a little cool reflection, but the more he reflected, the more he could not understand it: his eyes began to wag in his head, and he was just on the point of falling asleep, when a bob o'link alighted on a branch over his head and began to sing "Bob o'link! bob o'link! bob o'link!" Bob Lee's brains were by this time in such a fog that his eyes and ears were all askew, and he did not doubt somebody was calling on him.

"Hollo, neighbour!" says Bob Lee.

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! what ye got? what ye got? what ye got?" chattered the bird—as Bob thought.

"Got a fox-skin," answered he. "D'ye want to buy?"

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! what'll ye take? what'll ye take?" returned the little feathered chatterer.

"Half a dollar," replied Bob, "and it's worth every cent of the money."

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! bob o'link! two and threepence! two and threepence! two and threepence!" was the reply from the apple-tree.

"Won't take," said Bob; "it's a real silver-grey; half a dollar is little enough for it. Can't sell it for two and threepence."

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! you'd better, you'd better, you'd better; two and threepence, two and threepence, two and threepence; now or never, now or never, now or never."

"Can't ye say any more? Well, take it then. I won't stand for ninepence. Hand us over the money," said Bob, twisting his head round and round, endeavouring to get a sight of the person with whom he was bargaining.

"Bob o'link! bob o'link! bob o'link! let's have it! let's have it! let's have it! quick or ye lose it! quick or ye lose it!"

Bob turned his head toward the quarter from which the sound proceeded, and imagining he saw somebody in the tree, threw up the fox-skin, exclaiming, "There it is, and cheap enough too, at two and threepence." Mr Bob o'link started and flew away, singing "Bob o'link, bob o'link! catch a weasel, catch a weasel, catch a weasel!" for Bob Lee made clear English of everything that the bird said, and never doubted all the while that he was driving a regular bargain with a country trader. At the same time, spying a toadstool growing at the foot of the tree, he imagined it to be a half dollar, and made a grasp at it. The toadstool was demolished under his hand, but Bob happened to clutch a pebble-stone at the same moment, thrust it into his pocket fully persuaded he had secured his coin. "Can't make change—remember it next time!" said he, and so turning about, he made the best of his way homewards.

When he awoke the next morning, he felt in his pocket for the half dollar, but his astonishment cannot be described at finding it metamorphosed into a stone. He rubbed his eyes, but the more he rubbed them the more like a stone it looked:—decidedly a stone! He thought of witchcraft, but presently recollecting that he had taken a drop too much just before the bargain under the apple-tree, he became of opinion that he had been cheated, and that the crafty rogue who had bought his fox-skin had taken advantage of his circumstances to palm off a stone upon him for silver. Bob started upon his legs at the very thought. "A rascal!" he exclaimed, "I'll catch him if he's above ground!" No sooner said than done. Out he sallied in a tremendous chafe, determined to pursue the rogue to the further end of the State. He questioned every person he met, whether he had not seen a crafty-looking caitiff sharking about the town and buying fox-skins, but nobody seemed to know any such creature. He ran up and down the road, called at Major Shute's tavern, at Deacon Grabbit's store, at Colonel Crabapple's grocery, at Tim Thumper's shoemaker's shop, at Cobb's bank, and at Slouch's corner, but not a soul had seen the man with the fox-skin. Bob was half out of his wits at being thus baulked in his chase, never imagining he was all the while in pursuit of an innocent little bob o'link.

In great vexation at this disappointment, he was slowly plodding his way homeward, when he came in sight of the spot where he had made this unfortunate traffic with the roguish unknown. "O apple-tree!" he exclaimed, "if thou bee'st an honest apple-tree, tell me what has become of my

fox-skin." He looked as he uttered these words, and to his astonishment, there was his fox-skin, dangling in the air at the end of a branch! He knew not what to make of so strange an adventure, but he was nevertheless overjoyed to recover his property, and climbing the tree, threw it to the ground. The tree was old and hollow; in descending, he thrust his foot into an opening in the trunk, some distance above the ground, and felt something loose inside. He drew it out and found it was a heavy lump, which he imagined at first to be a stone wrapped round with a cloth. It proved however on examination to be a bag of dollars!

He could hardly believe his eyes, but after turning them over and over, ringing them upon a stone and cutting the edge of some of them with a knife, at length satisfied himself that they were true silver pieces. The next inquiry was, how they came there, and to whom they belonged. Here he was totally in the dark. The owner of the land surely could not be the proprietor of the money, for he had no need of a strong-box in such a sly place. The money had lain in the tree some years, as was evident from the condition of the bag, which was nearly decayed. Was it stolen? No—because nobody in these parts had lost such a sum. Was it the fruit of a highway robbery? No robbery had been committed in this quarter, time out of mind. There were no imaginable means of accounting for the deposit of money in such a place. The owner or depositor had never returned to claim it, and was now probably dead or gone away, never to return.

Such were the thoughts that Bob revolved in his mind as he gloated over his newly-gotten treasure. At first he thought of making the discovery public, but reflecting on the many annoyances which this would bring upon him in the inquisitive curiosity of his neighbours, and more especially considering that the cash must in consequence lie a long time useless, ere he could be legally allowed to apply it as his own property, he resolved to say nothing about it, but to consider the money his own immediately. It was therefore conveyed the same evening to his house, and snugly lodged in his chest.

From that day forward it began to be remarked among the neighbours, that Bob Lee was mighty flush of money, and though he had no visible means of subsistence, spent a great deal more than he was wont. More especially it excited their wonder that his pockets always contained hard dollars, while other people had little besides paper. There is nothing equal to the prying curiosity of the inhabitants of a country village, and the buzzing and stir which an insignifi-

cant matter will arouse among a set of inquisitive gossips. Everybody began to talk about the affair, but nobody knew how to account for it. All sorts of guesses and conjectures were put upon the rack, but nothing was able to explain the mystery. All sorts of hints, inquiries, and entreaties were put in requisition. Bob was proof against all their inquisitiveness, and seemed resolved to let them die in the agonies of unsatisfied curiosity.

Bob stood it out for a long while; but human endurance has its limits, and after being worried with guesses and questions till he despaired of ever being left in quiet possession of his own secret, he began to cast about for a method of allaying the public curiosity in some measure, or at least of turning it aside from himself. An old gossip, named Goody Brown, had laid siege to him about the affair from the first moment. One afternoon she dropped in as usual, and after some preliminary tattle, recommenced the attack by inquiring, with a significant look and shake of the head, whether money was as scarce as ever with him. Bob had been for some time thinking of a trick to play the old lady, and thought this a good moment to begin his mystification: so putting on a look of great seriousness, knitting his brows, and puckering up his mouth, as if big with a mighty secret about to be communicated, he replied:

"Really, Mrs Brown—I have been thinking, whether—now you are a prudent woman, I am certain."

"A prudent woman, indeed! who ever thought of calling me imprudent? Everybody calls me a prudent woman, to be sure. You need not doubt it, though I say so."

"You are a prudent woman, no doubt, and I have been thinking, I say, whether I might trust you with a secret!"

"A secret! a secret! a secret! Oh, Mr Bob, then there is a secret?" said the old lady, aroused into great animation by the prospect of getting at the bottom of the mystery at last.

"Yes, Mrs Brown, to confess the truth, there is a secret."

"Oh! I knew it! I knew it! I knew there was a secret. I always said there was a secret—I was always sure there was a secret! I told everybody I knew there must be a secret."

"But, Mrs Brown, this must be kept a secret; so perhaps I had better keep it to myself. If you cannot keep a secret, why then—"

"Good luck! Mr Lee, I am sure you are not afraid. Never fear me: I can keep a secret. Everybody knows how well I can keep a secret."

"Everybody knows, to be sure, how well you can keep a secret; that is just what I am thinking about."

"Sure, Mr Bob, you don't mean to keep me out of the secret now you have begun. Come, come, what is it? You know I can keep a secret; you know I can."

"But this, recollect, Mrs Brown, is a very particular secret; and if I tell it to you—hey, Mrs Brown, it must be in confidence you know."

"Oh, in confidence! to be sure in confidence—certainly in confidence. I keep everything in confidence."

"But now I recollect, Mrs Brown, that story about Zachary Numps—they say you blabb'd."

"Oh law! now Mr Lee, no such thing! I only said one day in company with two or three people—altogether in confidence—that some folks might, if they chose, say so and so about some folks. It was all in confidence, but somehow or other it got out."

"If you are sure you can keep the secret then, I think I may trust you with it; but you must promise."

"Oh, promise! certainly I will promise, Mr Bob; nobody will promise more than I will—that is, I certainly will promise to keep the secret."

"Then let me tell you," said he, in a low, solemn voice, hitching his chair at the same time nearer to the old woman, who sat with open mouth and staring eyes, eager to devour the wished-for secret, "These dollars of mine, you know, Mrs Brown—" here he stopped, keeping her in the most provoking suspense imaginable.

"Yes, yes; the dollars, the dollars."

"These dollars of mine, you know, Mrs Brown, why they are dollars—hey?"

"Yes, the dollars, the dollars; go on, go on—where do they come from? Mr Bob, where do you get them?—where do you get them?"

"Why, I get them somewhere, you know; but where do you think?"

"Yes, yes, you get them somewhere; I always thought you got them somewhere: I always told everybody I knew you must get them somewhere."

"Very well, Mrs Brown."

"Very well, Mr Lee: but where do you get them? that is the question—you have not told me."

"Where do I get them," said Bob, slowly and solemnly, and rubbing his hands together, screwing up his mouth, rolling his eyes and shaking his head, while the old lady was on



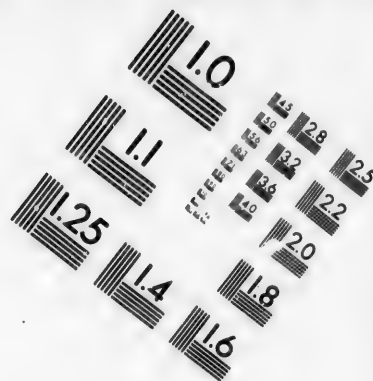
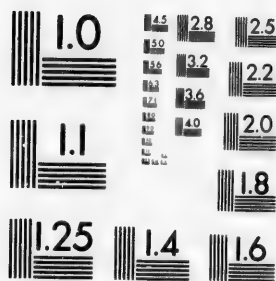
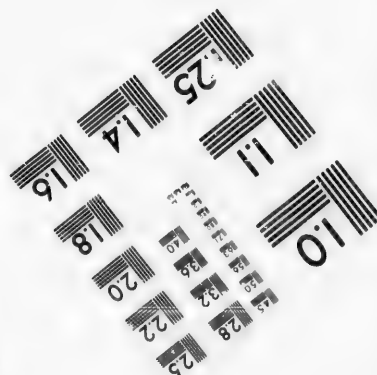


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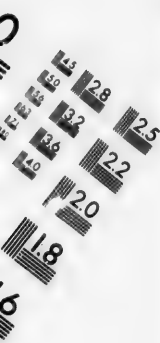


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the tenter-hooks of suspense and expectation. "Where do I get them? Now what do you think, Mrs Brown, of my old black hen?"

"Your old black hen! What do you mean?"

"There's the thing now! Then you never guessed, hey? Is it possible you never heard the story of the goose with the golden egg?"

"To be sure," replied Goody, opening her eyes wider than ever; "to be sure I have, to be sure, Mr Bob—to be sure. But your hen, you know, is not a goose."

"That is very true, Mrs Brown; but here is another question. If a goose can lay a golden egg, why can't a hen lay a silver one?"

"Sure enough, Mr Lee, sure enough, sure enough," said the old woman, beginning to get some light on the subject.

"Sure enough, as you say. Now this black hen of mine—every day I go to the nest and find a silver dollar there!"

"You amaze me, Bob!" said she, in the greatest astonishment. "Who would have thought it! Indeed! indeed! indeed! and is it true?"

"Why, Mrs Brown, if I do not get them there, where do I get them?"

"Sure enough. Well, my stars! I almost knew it—I always thought there was something strange in the looks of that black hen."

"Ah, you are a cunning woman—but be sure you keep it a secret."

"To be sure, never fear me. A dollar a day! Who would have thought it! Bless me, what a lucky man! Do, Mr Lee, let me see the nest; it must be very curious: I am dying to see it."

"Certainly, with all my heart; but let us see if there is nobody coming. Ah, step this way; I keep her in a snug place, you see, because if she should run away, what should I do for cash?"

So saying, he led the way, and the old woman trotted after him. He carried her in at one door and out at another, up this passage and down that, over, under and through, zig-zag and round about, through all the rigmarole turnings and twistings upon his premises, in order to give the whole affair an appearance of greater mystery. At last coming to a little nook in the corner of his barn, he told her that was the place. She gazed at it with staring eyes and uplifted hands, exclaiming,

"Was there ever anything like it!"

Bob, to carry on the trick, concealed a dollar in his sleeve, and thrust his hand into the nest, drew it forth, and exhibited it to the old woman, who was now fully convinced, because she had actually seen the dollar in the nest, and who could doubt after such a proof?

It is needless to add that within two days, the story was trumpeted all over the town, and Bob was beset with greater crowds than ever; so far from diminishing the curiosity of his neighbours by the stratagem, he found he had augmented it tenfold. It is not to be supposed that every one believed the story, but there were enough who did, and the remainder fell to wondering, guessing, and questioning with more pertinacity than ever. Bob's house was besieged from morning till night, and the unfortunate man, under these redoubled annoyances, found he had got out of the frying-pan into the fire. He now denied the whole story, and declared that he had been only sporting with the credulity of the old Goody; but unluckily they would not believe him; people do not like to have their belief in the marvellous disturbed; they could not believe his tale of finding the money in an oak tree, but that the dollars were got from a hen's nest, was something worth believing. Bob, at a loss what to do in this emergency, applied to many people for advice, and at last was struck with the following counsel from Deacon Grabbit.

"If I were in your place," said the Deacon, "I think I would make the hen turn me a penny:—for why? If folks believe she gives you a dollar a day, they will be willing to give a good price for her, and if they buy her and find themselves mistaken, that is their look-out. Now I would put her up at auction and sell her for the most she will bring: it will be a fair bargain, provided you warrant nothing!"

This advice seemed excellent, and Bob was not long in making up his mind to follow it. He accordingly gave public notice, that he should expose his hen at auction in front of the Meeting-house on Saturday afternoon next, at four of the clock. This announcement made a great stir, and when the time arrived, he found a prodigious crowd assembled. Bob mounted the top of a hogshead with his hen in one hand and a stick of wood in the other, and began the following harangue—

"Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong! Ahoy, ahoy, ahoy! Know all men by these presents. Whereas, nevertheless, notwithstanding. Gentlemen, please to come to order and attend to the sale. Here we are in the name of the common-wealth, and here is the fowl all the world is talking about,

now to be sold to the highest bidder. Whoever buys her will get a black pullet for his pay, but as to silver dollars, that is neither here nor there; I warrant no such thing, but it may be, and it may not be; nobody knows all the pickings and scratchings of the hen creation. I'll warrant the creature to be sound of wind and limb, but whether her eggs are round or flat, I shan't be flat enough to swear quite so roundly: that is the buyer's affair, not mine. Gentlemen, I moreover warrant her to be a black hen, and that no washing can make her white, except whitewashing. But whether black or white, nobody can say black is the white of her eye, for she is as honest a soul as ever picked up a crumb, and if she deals in dollars, you may depend upon it they are not counterfeit. Whoever buys her will get his money's worth if he does not give too much; and he may reckon on any reasonable number of chickens, provided he does not reckon them before they are hatched. Gentlemen, I won't be certain as to her age, but I will assure you this, that if she is too young, it is a fault will grow less and less every day. Here she goes. What'll ye give me? What'll ye give me? What'll ye give me? Come bid away, gentlemen, and make your fortunes. Some folks say I have made my fortune by her, and good luck betide them while they speak the truth, say I. People say this and that, but I say nothing. So, who buys my hen?—Going—going, going!”

The old hen set up a loud cackling, and fluttered her wings prodigiously, at the conclusion of this speech, much to the astonishment of the crowd of spectators, who gaped, stared, and scratched their heads, imagining that the creature understood every word of what was uttered, and never suspecting that Bob had given her a smart pull by the tail to make her squall out. They shook their heads and observed that the creature looked as if she saw something: Bob called out for bidders, but his customers, with true Yankee caution, bid slowly, and made very low offers: at last however she was knocked off to a credulous bumpkin, named Giles Elderberry, for six dollars, to be paid in corn and potatoes at a fair price the next fall. Bob delivered him the hen, and took Giles's note of hand for the pay.

Giles took his purchase home in great glee, hugging himself with the prospect of having a heap of silver ere many days. He bestowed her snugly in his hencoop, and was hardly able to shut his eyes that night, by thinking of the fortune that awaited him. Next morning he ran to the nest, but was disappointed in not finding the dollar. He waited

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all day and saw the night approach, but nothing rewarded his patience. He began to scratch his head, but presently bethought himself that it was Sunday, and the hen being orthodox, would not lay till the next day. So he went to bed again with undiminished hopes. But Monday came and there was no dollar to be seen: he cudgelled his brain, and suspected there might be witches in the case; thereupon he nailed a horseshoe on the door of the hencoop, and waited another day, but nothing came of it. He now sat down upon a log of wood, and fell to pondering upon the matter with all his might; finally another thought struck him, and he imagined a nest-egg might be wanting. Straightway he procured a dollar and lodged it in the nest, but it did not bring him even six per cent. interest, for the next day there was a dollar and no more. He tried various other expedients, but they all failed in the same manner. The neighbours inquired about his success, but he informed them that the hen put it off terribly. He consulted Bob Lee about it, and got only a bantering answer and a hint about the note of hand. Giles was not to be bantered out of his belief, but laid the case before sundry of his acquaintance, who were notorious for their credulity in all marvellous affairs. Most of them gave it as their opinion that the hen was bewitched, and Giles was already inclined to the same belief: his only solicitude now was to discover some means of disenchantment.

At length a waggish fellow of the town, who had got a scent of the affair, meeting Giles one day, informed him that he knew of a scheme that would do the job for him. Giles begged earnestly to know it, and promised as a recompense to give him the first dollar the hen should lay, in case the plan succeeded, "for you know," said he, "it is a fair bargain, no cure, no pay."

"You'll find that next fall," replied the fellow.

He then communicated the scheme, by which Giles was instructed to go to the top of Blueberry Hill the next morning at six o'clock, mark out a circle on the ground, set up a tall pole in the centre with the hen at the top: he was then to walk three times round it, heels foremost, say the A B C backwards, sing a stave of Old Hundred, cry cock-a-doodle-doo, and sneeze three times—all which he was assured would break the spell.

Giles took all this for gospel, and the next morning he was on the spot ready prepared at the hour. He set his fowl up in the air and went to work with the incantation; all was going on prosperously and according to rule: he had got

through the psalm tune, crowed as exactly like an old rooster as one could wish, and was just taking a thumping pinch of Scotch yellow to enable him to sneeze with more effect, when casting his eyes aloft he descried a monstrous hen-hawk upon the wing in the act of making a stoop at his enchanted fowl. Giles blurted out a tremendous sternutation, but the hawk was not to be sneezed out of his prey, for before he could rub away the tears which this explosion shook into his eyes, souse came the hawk upon the hen, and both were out of sight among the woods!

Giles scratched his head and stared with wonder, but they never came back to give any account of themselves: he is certain although, that had he got through the incantation half a minute sooner, the hen would have been as safe as a thief in a mill. I have heard people say that he has still some expectation of their return, but I believe he has given up speculating in poultry. However, the memory of the story remains in those parts, and when a person does anything that shows uncommon wisdom, such as discovering that the Dutch have taken Holland, or that asses have ears, he is said to be akin to the witches, like Bob Lee's hen.

XVI.

THE SHOOTING-MATCH.

SHOOTING-MATCHES are probably nearly coeval with the colonization of Georgia. They are still common throughout the Southern States; though they are not as common as they were twenty-five or thirty years ago. I was travelling in one of the north-eastern counties, when I overtook a swarthy, bright-eyed, smirky little fellow, riding a small pony, and bearing on his shoulder a long, heavy rifle, which, judging from its looks, I should say had done service in Morgan's corps.

"Good morning, Sir," said I, reining up my horse, as I came beside him.

"How goes it, stranger?" said he, with a tone of independence and self-confidence that awakened my curiosity to know a little of his character.

"Going driving?" inquired I.

"Not exactly," replied he, surveying my horse with a quiz-

z'cal smile, "I haven't been a-driving *by myself* for a year or two, and my nose has got so bad lately I can't carry a cold-trail *without hounds to help me.*"

Alone, and without hounds as he was, the question was rather a silly one; but it answered the purpose for which it was put, which was only to draw him into conversation, and I proceeded to make as decent retreat as I could.

"I didn't know," I said, "but that you were going to meet the huntsmen, or going to your stand."

"Ah, sure enough," rejoined he, "that *mout* be a bee, as the old woman said when she killed a wasp. It seems to me I ought to know you."

"Well, if you *ought* why *don't* you?"

"What *mout* your name be?"

"It *might* be anything," said I, with borrowed wit; for I knew my man, and knew what kind of conversation would please him most.

"Well, what *is* it then?"

"It *is* Hall," said I; "but, you know, it might as well have been anything else."

"Pretty digging," said he, "I find you're not the fool I took you to be; so here's to a better acquaintance with you."

"With all my heart," returned I; "but you must be as clever as I've been, and give me your name."

"To be sure I will, my old 'coon; take it, take it, and welcome. Anything else about me you'd like to have?"

"No," said I, "there's nothing else about you worth having."

"Oh yes, there is, stranger. Do you see this?" holding up his ponderous rifle with an ease that astonished me. "If you will go with me to the shooting-match, and see me knock out the *bull's* eye with her a few times, you'll agree the old *soap-stick's* worth something when Billy Curlew puts his shoulder to her."

This short sentence was replete with information to me: it taught me that my companion was Billy Curlew; that he was going to a *shooting-match*; that he called his rifle the *soap-stick*; and that he was very confident of winning beef with her; or, which is nearly, but not quite the same thing—*driving the cross with her.*

"Well," said I, "if the shooting-match is not too far out of my way, I'll go to it with pleasure."

"Unless your way lies through the woods from here," said Billy, "it'll not be much out of your way; for it's only a mile a-head of us, and there's no other road for you to take

till you get there; and as that thing you're riding in ain't well suited to fast travelling among bushy knobs, I reckon you won't lose much by going by. I reckon you hardly ever was at a shooting-match, stranger, from the cut of your coat?"

"Oh yes," returned I, "many a time. I won beef at one, when I was hardly old enough to hold a short-gun off-hand."

"Children don't go to shooting-matches about here," said he, with a smile of incredulity. "I never heard of but one that did, and he was a little *swinge-cat*. He was born a-shooting, and killed squirrels before he was weaned."

"Nor did I ever hear of but one," replied I, "and that one was myself."

"And where did you win beef so young, stranger?"

"At Berry Adam's."

"Why stop, stranger, let me look at you. Good. Is your name Lyman Hall?"

"The very same," said I.

"Well, dang my buttons, if you ain't the very boy my daddy used to tell me about! I was too young to recollect you myself; but I've heard daddy talk about you many a time. I believe mammy's got a neck-handkerchief now that daddy won on your shooting at Collen Reid's store, when you were hardly knee-high. Come along, Lyman, and I'll go my death upon you at the shooting-match, with the old soap-stick at your shoulder."

"Ah, Billy," said I, "the old soap-stick will do much better at your own shoulder. It was my mother's notion that sent me to the shooting-match at Berry Adam's; and, to tell you the honest truth, it was altogether a chance shot that made me win beef; but that wasn't generally known, and most everybody believed that I was carried there on account of my skill in shooting; and my fame was spread far and wide, I well remember."

"I remember, too, perfectly well your father's bet on me at the store. He was at the shooting-match, and nothing could make him believe but that I was a great shot with a rifle, as well as a shot-gun. Bet he would on me, in spite of all I could say, though I assured him that I had never shot a rifle in my life. It so happened too, that there were but two bullets, or rather a bullet and a half; and so confident was your father in my skill that he made me shoot the half bullet, and strange to tell, by another chance shot I like to have drove the cross, and won his bet."

"Now I know you're the very chap; for I heard daddy

tell the very thing about the half bullet. Don't say anything about it, Lyman, and durn my old shoes if I don't tear the lint off the boys with you at the shooting-match. They'll never 'spect such a looking man as you are of knowing anything about a rifle. I'll risk your *chance* shot."

I soon discovered that the father had eaten sour grapes, and the son's teeth were on edge; for Billy was just as incorrigibly obstinate in his belief of my dexterity with a rifle as his father had been before him.

We soon reached the place appointed for the shooting-match. It went by the name of Sims' Cross Roads, because, from the time that the first had been laid out, Archibald Sims had resided there. Archibald had been a Justice of the Peace in his day (and where is the man of his age in Georgia who has not?), consequently he was called Squire Sims. It is the custom in this State, when a man has once acquired a title, civil or military, to force it upon him as long as he lives; hence the countless number of titled personages who are introduced in these sketches.

We stopped at the Squire's door. Billy hastily dismounted, gave me the shake of the hand which he had been reluctantly reserving for a mile back, and leading me to the Squire, thus introduced me:

"Uncle Archy, this is Lyman Hall; and for all you see him in these fine clothes he's a *swinge*-cat—a darn sight cleverer fellow than he looks to be. Wait till you see him lift the old soap-stick, and draw a bead upon the bull's eye. You *gwine* to see fun to-day? Don't say nothing about it."

"Well, Mr Swinge-cat," said the Squire, "here's to a better acquaintance with you," offering me his hand.

"How goes it, Uncle Archy?" said I, taking his hand warmly: for I'm always free and easy with those who are so with me, and in this course I rarely fail to please. "How's the old woman?"

"Egad!" said the Squire, chuckling, "there you're too hard for me; for she died two-and-twenty years ago, and I haven't heard a word from her since!"

"What! and you never married again?"

"Well, that's not my fault."

"No, nor mine *nither*," said I.

Here we were interrupted by the cry of another, Rancey Sniffle.

"Hello, here! All you as wish to put in for the shooting-match come on here! for the put'n in's *viddy* to begin."

About sixty persons, including men spectators, had col-

lected; and the most of them were more or less obedient to the call of Mealy Whitecotton—for that was the name of the self-constituted commander-in-chief. Some hastened and some loitered, as they desired to be first or last on the list; for they shoot in the order in which their names are entered.

The beef was not present, nor is it ever upon such occasions; but several of the company had seen it, who all concurred in the opinion that it was good beef, and well worth the price that was set upon it—eleven dollars. A general inquiry ran, in order to form some opinion as to the number of shots that would be taken; for, of course, the price of a shot is cheapened in proportion to the increase of that number. It was soon ascertained that not more than twenty persons would take chances; but these twenty agreed to take the number of shots at twenty-five cents each.

The competitors now began to give in their names; some for one, some for two, three, and a few for as many as four shots.

Billy Curlew hung back to the last, and when the list was offered to him, five lists remained undisposed of.

"How many shots left?" inquired Billy.

"Five," was the reply.

"Well, I take them all. Put down four shots for me, and one to Lyman Hall, paid for by William Curlew."

I was thunder-struck; not at his proposition to pay for my shot, because that Billy meant it as a token of friendship, and he would have been hurt if I had refused to let him do me this favour; but at the unexpected announcement of my name as a competitor for beef, at least one hundred miles from the place of my residence!

I was prepared for a challenge from Billy to some of his neighbours for a private match upon me, but not for this. I therefore protested against his putting in for me, and urged every reason to dissuade him from it that I could, without wounding his feelings.

"Put it down," said Billy, with the authority of an emperor, and with a look that spoke volumes, intelligible to every bystander. "Reckon I don't know what I'm about?" Then, wheeling off, and muttering in an under, self-confident tone: "Dang old Roper," continued he, "if he don't knock that cross to the north corner of creation, and back again, before a cat can lick her foot!"

Had I been king of the cat-tribe, they could not have regarded me with more curious attention than did the whole company, from this moment. Every inch of me was examined

with the nicest scrutiny; and some plainly expressed, by their looks, that they never would have taken me for such a bite. I saw no alternative, but to throw myself upon a third chance-shot; for, though by the rules of sport I would have been allowed to shoot by proxy, by all the rules of good-breeding I was bound to shoot in person. It would have been unpardonable to disappoint the expectations which had been raised on me. Unfortunately too for me, the match differed in one respect from those which I had been in the habit of attending in my younger days. In olden-time, the contest was carried on chiefly with *shot-guns*, a generic term, which, in those days, embraced three descriptions of fire-arms: *Indian-traders*—a long, cheap, but sometimes excellent kind of gun, that Mother Britain used to send hither for traffic with the Indians—the *large musket*, and the *shot-gun*, properly so-called.

Rifles were however always permitted to compete with them, under equitable restrictions. These were, that they should be fired off-hand, while the shot-guns were allowed a rest, the distance being equal; or that the distance should be one hundred yards for the rifle to sixty for the shot-gun, the mode of firing being equal.

But this was a match of rifles exclusively; and these are by far the most common at this time.

Most of the competitors fire at the same target, which is usually a board from nine inches to a foot wide, charred on one side as black as it can be made by fire, without impairing materially the uniformity of its surface; on the darkened side of which is pegged a square piece of white paper, which is larger or smaller, according to the distance at which it is to be placed from the marksmen. This is almost invariably sixty yards, and for it the paper is reduced to about two and a half inches square. Out of the centre of it is cut a rhombus of about the width of an inch, measured diagonally—this is the bull's eye, or diamond, as the marksmen choose to call it; in the centre of this is the cross. But every man is permitted to fix his target to his own taste; and accordingly, some remove one fourth of the paper, cutting from the centre of the square to the two lower corners, so as to leave a large opening from the centre downwards; while others reduce the angle more or less; but it is rarely the case that all are not satisfied with one of these figures.

The beef is divided into five prizes, or as they are commonly termed, five *quarters*, the hide and tallow counting as one. For several years after the revolutionary war, a sixth

was added; the *lead* which was shot in the match. This was the prize of the sixth best shot; and it used to be carefully extracted from the board, or tree, in which it was lodged, and afterwards remoulded. But this grew out of the exigency of the times, and has, I believe, been long since abandoned everywhere.

The three master-shots and rivals were Moses Firmby, Iarkin Spivey, and Billy Curlew, to whom was added, upon this occasion, by common consent, and with awful forebodings—your humble servant.

The target was fixed at an elevation of about three feet from the ground; and the judges (Captain Turner and Squire Porter) took their stands by it, joined by about half the spectators.

The first name on the catalogue was Mealy Whitecotton. Mealy stepped out, rifle in hand, and toed the mark. His rifle was about three inches longer than himself, and near enough his own thickness to make the remark of Darby Chisholm, as he stepped out, tolerably appropriate.

"Here comes the corn-stack and the sucker!" said Darby.

"Kiss my foot!" said Mealy; "the way I'll creep into that bull's eye's a fact."

"You'd better creep into your hind sight," said Darby.

Mealy raised and fired.

"A pretty good shot, Meal," said one.

"Yes, a blamed good shot!" said a second.

"Well done, Meal!" said a third.

I was rejoiced when one of the company inquired, "Where is it?" for I could hardly believe they were founding these remarks upon the evidence of their senses.

"Just on the right hand of the bull's eye," was the reply.

I looked with all the power of my eyes, but was unable to discover the least change in the surface of the paper. Their report, however, was true—so much keener is the vision of a practised than an unpractised eye.

The next in order was Hiram Baugh. Hiram was like some race-horses which I have seen—he was too good not to contend for every prize, and too good-for-nothing ever to win one.

"Gentlemen," said he, as he came to the mark, "I don't say that I'll win beef; but if my piece don't blow, I'll eat the paper, or be mighty apt to do it, if you'll believe my rocket. My powder are not good powder, gentlemen—I bought it *thum* (from) Teb Dagget, and gin him three quarters of a dollar a pound for it; but it are not what I call good

powder, gentlemen: but if old Buck-killer burns it clear, the boy you call Hiram Baugh eats paper or comes mighty near it."

"Well, blaze away!" said Mealy. "And be hanged, you and Teb Dagget, and your powder and your Buck-killer, and your powder-ho'n and shot-pouch to boot! How long you gwine stand thar talking 'fore you shoot?"

"Never mind," said Hiram, "I can talk a little and shoot a little too; but that's nothin'. Here goes!"

Hiram assumed the figure of a note of interrogation, took a long sight, and fired.

"I've eat paper," said he, at the crack of the gun, without looking, or seeming to look towards the target. "Buck-killer made a clear rocket. Where am I, gentlemen?"

"You're just between Mealy and the diamond," was the reply.

"I said I'd eat paper, and I've done it, haven't I, gentlemen?"

"And s'pose you have!" said Mealy, "what do that amount to? You'll no' win beef, and never did."

"Be that as it mout be, I've beat Meal 'Cotton mighty easy; and the boy you call Hiram Baugh are able to do it."

"And what do that 'mount to? Who ain't able to beat Meal 'Cotton! I don't make no pretence of being nothing great no how: but you always makes out as if you were gwine to keep 'em making crosses for you, constant; and then do nothin' but eat paper at last; and that's a long way from eating beef 'cording to Meal 'Cotton's notions, as you call him!"

Simon Stow was now called for.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed two or three, "now we have it. It'll take him as long to shoot as it would take Squire Dobbins to run a track o' land."

"Good-bye, boys," said Bob Martin.

"Where you going, Bob?"

"Going to gather in my crop. I'll be back again though by the time Sime Stow shoots."

Simon was used to all this, and therefore it did not disconcert him in the least. He went off, and brought his own target, and set it up with his own hand.

He then wiped out his rifle—rubbed the pan with his hat—drew a piece of tow through the touch-hole with his wiper—filled his charger with great care—poured the powder into his rifle with equal caution—shoved with his finger the two or three vagrant grains that lodged round the mouth of his

piece—took out a handful of bullets—looked them all over carefully—selected one without flaw or wrinkle—drew out his patching—found the most even part of it—sprung upon the grease-box in the breech of his rifle, greased side down—placed his ball upon it—pressed it a little—then took it up and turned the neck a little more perpendicularly downward—placed his knife-handle on it—just buried it in the mouth of the rifle—cut off the redundant patching just above the bullet—looked at it and shook his head in token that he had cut off too much or too little, no one knew which—sent down the ball—measured the contents of his gun with his first and second fingers, on the protruding part of the ramrod—shook his head again to signify that there was too much or too little powder—primed carefully—placed an arched piece of tin over the hind sight to shade it—took his piece—got a friend to hold his hat over the foresight to shade it—took a very long sight—fired, and didn't even eat paper.

"My piece was badly *load'nd*," said Simon, when he heard the place of his ball.

"Oh, you don't take time," said Mealy. "No man can shoot that's in such a hurry as you is. I'd hardly got to sleep 'fore I heard the crack o' the gun."

The next was Moses Firmby. He was a tall, slim man, of rather sallow complexion: and it is a very singular fact, that though probably no part of the world is more healthy than the mountainous regions of Georgia, the mountaineers have not generally robust forms or fine complexions: they are, however, almost inexhaustible by toil.

Moses kept us not long in suspense. His rifle was already charged, and he fixed it on the target with a steadiness of nerve and aim that was astonishing to me and alarming to all the rest. A few seconds, and the report of his rifle broke the death-like silence which prevailed.

"No great harm done yet," said Spivey, manifestly relieved from anxiety by an event which seemed to me better calculated to produce despair.

Firmby's ball had cut the lower angle of the diamond, directly on a right line with the cross.

Three or four followed him without bettering his shot; all of whom however with one exception, "eat the paper."

It now came to Spivey's turn. There was nothing remarkable in his person or manner. He took his place, lowered his rifle slowly from a perpendicular, until it came on a line with the mark—held it there like a vise for a moment, and fired.

"Pretty *seigrouse*, but nothing killing yet," said Billy Curlew, as he learned the place of Spivey's ball.

Spivey's ball had just broken the upper angle of the diamond, beating Firmby about half its width.

A few more shots, in which there was nothing remarkable, brought us to Billy Curlew. Billy stepped out with much confidence, and brought the soap-stick to an order, while he deliberately rolled up his shirt sleeves. Had I judged Billy's chance by the looks of his gun, I should have said it was hopeless. The stock of soap-stick seemed to have been made with a case-knife, and had it been, the tool would have been but a poor apology for its clumsy appearance.

An augur hole in the breech served for a grease-box, a cotton string assisted a single screw in holding on the lock, and the thimbles were made, one of brass, one of iron, and one of tin.

"Where's Lark Spivey's bullet?" called out Billy to the judges, as he finished rolling up his sleeves.

"About three quarters of an inch from the cross," was the reply.

"Weil, clear the way! the soap-stick's a coming, and she'll be along in there among 'em presently."

Billy now planted himself a-straddle, like an inverted V, shot forward his left hip, drew his body back to an angle of about forty-five degrees with the plane of the horizon, brought his cheek down close to the breech of old soap-stick, and fixed her upon the mark with an untrembling hand. His sight was long, and the swelling muscles of his left arm led me to believe that he was lessening his chance of success with every half second that he kept it burdened with his ponderous rifle; but it neither flagged nor wavered until soap-stick made her report.

"Where am I?" said Billy, as the smoke rose from before his eye.

"You've just touched the cross on the lower side," was the reply of one of the judges.

"I was afraid I was drawing my bead a *leetle* too fine," said Billy. "Now, Lyman, you see what the soap-stick can do. Take her, and show the boys how you used to do when you were a baby."

I begged to reserve my shot to the last; pleading, rather sophistically, that it was, in point of fact, one of Billy's shots. My plea was rather indulged than sustained; and the marksmen who had taken more than one shot commenced the second round. This round was a manifest improvement upon

the first. The cross was driven three times, once by Spivey, once by Firmby, and once by no less a personage than Mealy Whitecotton, whom chance seemed to favour for this time, merely that he might retaliate upon Hiram Baugh; and the bull's eye was disfigured out of all shape.

The third and fourth rounds were shot. Billy discharged his last shot, which left the rights of parties thus; Billy Curlew first and fourth choice, Spivey second, Firmby third, and Whitecotton fifth. Some of my readers may be curious to learn how a distinction comes to be made between several, all of whom drive the cross. The distinction is perfectly natural and equitable. Threads are stretched from the uneffaced parts of the once interesting lines, by means of which the original position of the cross is precisely ascertained. Each bullet-hole being nicely pegged up as it is made, it is easy to ascertain its circumference. To this, I believe they usually, if not invariably, measure where none of the balls touch the cross; but if the cross be driven, they measure from it to the centre of the bullet hole. To make a draw-shot, therefore, between two who drive the cross, it is necessary that the centre of both balls should pass directly through the cross—a thing that very rarely happens.

The *bite* alone remained to shoot. Billy wiped out his rifle carefully, loaded her to the top of his skill, and handed her to me.

"Now," said he, "Lyman, draw a fine bead, but not too fine; for soap-stick bears up her ball well. Take care, and don't touch the trigger until you've got your bead; for she's spring-triggered, and goes mighty easy; but you hold her to the place you want her, and if she don't go there, dang old Roper."

I took old soap-stick, and lapsed immediately into the most hopeless despair. I'm sure I never handled as heavy a gun in all my life.

"Why, Billy," said I, "you little mortal, you! what do you use such a gun as this, for?"

"Look at the bull's eye, yonder," said he.

"True," said I; "but I can't shoot her—it is impossible."

"Go 'long, you old coon," said Billy; "I see what you're at. (Intimating that all this was merely to make the coming shot the more remarkable.) "Daddy's little boy don't shoot anything but the old soap-stick here to-day, I know."

The judges, I knew, were becoming impatient, and, withal, my situation was growing more embarrassing every second; so I e'en resolved to try the soap-stick, without further parley.

I stepped out, and the most intense interest was excited all around me, and it flashed like electricity round the target, as I judged from the anxious gaze of all in that direction.

Policy dictated that I should fire with a falling rifle, and I adopted this mode, determining to fire as soon as the sights came on a line with the diamond, *bead or no bead*. Accordingly, I commenced lowering old soap-stick; but, in spite of all my muscular powers, she was strictly obedient to the laws of gravitation, and came down with an uniformly accelerated velocity. Before I could arrest her downward flight, she had not only passed the target, but was making rapid encroachments on my own toes.

"Why, he's the weakest man in the arms I ever seed," said one, in a half-whisper.

"It's only his fun," said Billy; "I know him."

"It may be fun," said the other, "but it looks mightily like yearning to a man up a tree."

I now, of course, determined to reverse the mode of firing, and put forth all my physical energies to raise soap-stick to the mark. The effort silenced Billy, and gave tongue to his companions. I had just strength enough to master soap-stick's obstinate proclivity, and consequently my nerves began to exhibit palpable signs of distress with her first imperceptible movement upward.

A trembling commenced in my arms, increased and extended rapidly to my body and lower extremities, so that, by the time I brought soap-stick up to the mark, I was shaking from head to foot, exactly like a man under the continued action of a strong galvanic battery. In the mean time my friends gave vent to their feelings freely.

"I swear, point blank," said one, "that man can't shoot."

"He used to shoot well," said another; "but can't now, nor never could."

"You better git away from 'bout that mark," bawled a third; "for I'll be d—d if Broadcloth don't give some of you the dry gripes, if you stand too close there."

"The stranger's got the *Peedoddles*," said a fourth, with humorous gravity.

"If he had bullets enough in his gun, he'd shoot a ring round the bull's eye, big as a spinning-well," said a fifth.

As soon as I found that soap-stick was high enough (for I made no further use of the sights than to ascertain this fact), I pulled the trigger, and off she went.

I have always found the most creditable way of relieving myself of derision, was to heighten it myself as much as pos-

sible. It is a good plan in all circles, but by far the best which can be adopted among the plain, rough farmers of the country. Accordingly, I brought old soap-stick to an order with an air of triumph, tipped Billy the wink, and observed:

"Now Billy's your time to make your fortune. Bet 'em two to one that I've knocked out the cross."

"No, I'll be dod blamed if I do," said Billy; "but I'll bet you two to one that you ha'nt hit the plank."

"Ah, Billy," said I, "I was joking about betting, for I never bet, nor would I have you bet; indeed, I do not feel exactly right in shooting for beef, for it is a species of gaming, at last; but I'll say this much, if that cross has not been knocked out, I'll never shoot for beef again as long as I live."

"By dod," said Mealy Whitecotton, "you'll lose no great things at that."

"Well," said I, "I reckon I know a little about wabbling. Is it possible, Billy, a man who shoots as well as you do, never practised shooting with the double wabble? It's the greatest take in in the world, when you learn to drive the cross with it. Another sort for getting bets upon, to the drop sight and single wabble; and the soap-stick's the very yarn for it."

"Tell you what, stranger," said one; "you're too hard for us all here. We never *hearn* o' that sort o' shoot'n in these parts."

"Well," returned I, "you've seen it now, and I'm the boy that can do it."

The judges were now approaching with the target, and a singular combination of circumstances had kept all my party in utter ignorance of the result of my shot.

Those about the target had been prepared for a great shot from me; their expectations had received assurance from the courtesy which had been expended to me; and nothing had happened to disappoint them, but the single caution against the "dry gripes," which was as likely to have been given in irony as in earnest; for my agonies under the weight of the soap-stick were either imperceptible to them, at the distance of sixty yards, or being visible, were taken as the flourishes of an expert, who wished to "astonish the natives." The other party did not think the direction of my ball worth the trouble of a question; or if they did, my airs and harangues had put the thought to flight before it was delivered. Consequently, they were all transfixed with astonishment, when the judges presented the target to them, and gravely observed:

"It's only second best, after all the fuss."

"Second best!" exclaimed I, with uncontrollable transports.

The whole of my party rushed to the target, to have the evidence of their senses, before they would believe the report; but most marvellous fortune decreed that it should be true. Their incredulity and astonishment were most fortunate for me, for they blinded my hearers to the real feelings with which the exclamation was uttered, and allowed me sufficient time to prepare myself for making the best use of what I had said before, with a very different object.

"Second best!" reiterated I, with an air of despondency, as the company turned from the target to me; "second best, only! Here, Billy, my son, take the old soap-stick; she's a good piece, but I'm getting too old and dim-sighted to shoot a rifle; especially with the drop sight and double wabbles."

"Why, darn my buttons!" said Billy, with a look that baffles all description; "ain't you *driv* the cross!"

"Oh, driv the cross," rejoined I, carelessly. "What's that? Just look where my ball is! I do believe, in my soul, its centre is a quarter of an inch from the cross. I wanted to lay the centre of the bullet upon the cross, just as if you'd put it there with your fingers."

Several received this palaver with a contemptuous, but very appropriate, curl of the nose; and Mealy Whitecotton offered to bet half-a-pint, "that I couldn't do the like agin, with no sort of wabbles, he didn't care what."

But I had fortified myself on this quarter by my morality. A decided majority however were clearly of opinion that I was serious; and they regarded me as one of the wonders of the world. Billy increased the majority by now coming out fully with my history, as he had received it from his father; to which I listened with quite as much astonishment as any other one of his hearers. He begged me to go home with him for the night, or, as he expressed it, "go home with him, and swap lies that night, and it shouldn't cost me a cent;" the true reading of which is, that if I would go home with him, and give him the pleasure of an evening's chat about old times, his house should be as free to me as my own. But I could not accept his hospitality, without retracing five or six miles of the road which I had already passed; and therefore I declined it.

"Well, if you won't go, what must I tell the old woman for you? for she'll be mighty glad to hear from the boy that won the silk handkerchief for her; and I expect she'll lick me for not bringing you home with me."

"Tell her," said I, "that I send her a quarter of beef, which I won as I did the handkerchief, by nothing in the world but more good luck."

"Hold your jaw, Lyman," said Billy; "I ain't a gwine to tell the old woman any such lies; for she's a *rael*, reg'lar built Meth'dist."

As I turned to depart—

"Stop a minute, stranger," said one; then lowering his voice to a confidential, but strictly audible tone: "What are you offering for?" continued he.

I assured him I was not a candidate for anything—that I had accidentally fallen in with Billy Curlew, who begged me to come with him to the shooting-match; and as it lay right on my road, I had stopped.

"Oh," said he, with a conciliatory nod, "if you're up for anything, you needn't be mealy-mouthed about it, 'fore us boys; for we'll all go in for you here, up to the handle."

"Yes," said Billy, "dang old Roper, if we don't go our deaths for you, no matter who offers. If ever you come out for anything, Lyman, just let the boys of Upper Hogthief know it, and they'll go for you, to the hilt, against creation, tit or no tit, that's *tatur*."

I thanked him kindly, but repeated my assurances.

The reader will not suppose that the district took its name from the character of the inhabitants. In almost every county in the State, there is some spot or district which bears a contemptuous appellation, usually derived from local rivalry, or from a single accidental circumstance.

XVII.

THE HORSE SWAP.

DURING the session of the Superior Court, in the village of —, about three weeks ago, when a number of people were collected in the principal street of the village, I observed a young man riding up and down the street, as I supposed, in a violent passion. He galloped this way, then that, and then the other. Spurred his horse to one group of citizens, then to another. Then dashed off at half speed, as if fleeing from danger; and suddenly checking his horse, returned—first in a pace, then in a trot, and then in a canter. While he was

performing these various evolutions, he cursed, swore, whooped, screamed, and tossed himself in every attitude which man could assume on horseback. In short, he *cavorted* most magnanimously (a term which, in our tongue, expresses all that I have described, and a little more), and seemed to be setting all creation at defiance.

As I like to see all that is passing, I determined to take a position a little nearer to him, and to ascertain, if possible, what it was that affected him so sensibly. Accordingly I approached a crowd before which he had stopped for a moment, and examined it with the strictest scrutiny. But I could see nothing in it that seemed to be anything to do with the cavorter. Every man appeared to be in good humour, and all minding their own business. Not one so much as noticed the principal figure. Still he went on. After a semicolon pause, which my appearance seemed to produce—for he eyed me closely as I approached—he fetched a whoop, and swore that “he could out-swap any live man, woman, or child, that ever walked these hills, or that ever straddled horse-flesh since the days of old daddy Adam.”

“Stranger,” said he to me, “did you ever see the *Yellow Blossom* from Jasper?”

“No,” said I, “but I have often heard of him.”

“I’m the boy,” continued he; “perhaps a *leetle*—jist a *leetle* of the best man, at a horse swap, that ever trod shoe-leather.”

I began to feel my situation a little awkward, when I was relieved by a man somewhat advanced in years, who stepped up and began to survey the “*Yellow Blossom’s*” horse with much apparent interest. This drew the rider’s attention, and he turned the conversation from me to the stranger.

“Well, my old ’coon,” said he, “do you want to swap *hosses*?”

“Why, I don’t know,” replied the stranger; “I believe I’ve got a beast I’d trade with you for that one, if you like him.”

“Well, fetch up your nag, my old cock; you’re jist the lark I wanted to get hold of. I am perhaps a *leetle*, jist a *leetle*, of the best man at a horse swap, that ever stole *crack-lins* out of his mammy’s fat-gourd. Where’s your *hoss*?”

“I’ll bring him presently; but I want to examine your horse a little.”

“Oh! look at him,” said the Blossom, alighting and hitting him a cut, “look at him. He’s the best piece of *hoss* flesh in the thirteen united universal worlds. There’s no sort o’ mistake in little Bullet. He can pick up miles on his

feet and fling 'em behind him as fast as the next man's *hoss*, I don't care where he comes from. And he can keep it as long as the sun can shine without resting."

During this harangue, little Bullet looked as if he understood it all, believed it, and was ready at any moment to verify it. He was a horse of goodly countenance, rather expressive of vigilance than fire; though an unnatural appearance of fierceness was thrown into it, by the loss of his ears, which had been cropped pretty close to his head. Nature had done but little for Bullet's head and neck; but he managed, in a great measure, to hide their defects, by bowing perpetually. He had obviously suffered severely for corn; but if his ribs and hip bones had not disclosed the fact, *he* never would have done it; for he was, in all respects, as cheerful and happy as if he commanded all the corn-cribs and fodder-stacks in Georgia. His height was about twelve hands; but as his shape partook somewhat of that of the giraffe, his haunches stood much lower. They were short, strait, peaked, and concave. Bullet's tail however made amends for all his defects. All that the artist could do to beautify it, had been done; and all that horse could do to compliment the artist, Bullet did. His tail was nicked in superior style, and exhibited the line of beauty in so many directions, that it could not fail to hit the most fastidious taste in some of them. From the root it dropped into a graceful festoon; then rose in a handsome curve; then resumed its first direction; and then mounted suddenly upwards like a cypress knee, to a perpendicular of about two and a half inches. The whole had a careless and bewitching inclination to the right.

Bullet obviously knew where his beauty lay, and took all occasions to display it to the best advantage. If a stick cracked, or if any one moved suddenly about him, or coughed, or hawked, or spoke a little louder than common, up went Bullet's tail like lightning; and if the *going up* did not please, the *coming down* must of necessity, for it was as different from the other movement as was its direction. The first was a bold and rapid flight upward; usually to an angle of forty-five degrees. In this position he kept his interesting appendage, until he satisfied himself that nothing in particular was to be done; when he commenced dropping it by half-inches, in second beats—then in triple time—then faster and shorter, and faster and shorter still; until it finally died away imperceptibly into its natural position. If I might compare sights to sounds, I should say its *settling* was more like the note of a locust than anything else in nature.

Either from native sprightliness of disposition, from uncontrollable activity, or from an unconquerable habit of removing flies by the stamping of the feet, Bullet never stood still; but always kept up a gentle fly-scaring movement of his limbs, which was peculiarly interesting.

"I tell you, man," proceeded the Yellow Blossom, "he's the best live hoss that ever trod the grit of Georgia. Bob Smart knows the hoss. Come here, Bob, and mount this hoss and show Bullet's motions."

Here Bullet bristled up and looked as if he had been hunting for Bob all day long, and had just found him. Bob sprang on his back.

"Boo-oo-oo!" said Bob, with a fluttering noise of the lips; and away went Bullet, as if in a quarter race, with all his beauties spread in handsome style.

"Now fetch him back," said Blossom.

Bullet turned and came in pretty much as he went out.

"Now trot him by."

Bullet reduced his tail to "*customary*"—sidled to the right and left airily, and exhibited at least three varieties of trot, in the short space of fifty yards.

"Make him pace!"

Bob commenced twitching the bridle and kicking at the same time. These inconsistent movements obviously (and most naturally) disconcerted Bullet; for it was impossible for him to learn from them whether he was to proceed or stand still. He started to trot—and was told that wouldn't do. He attempted a canter—and was checked again. He stopt—and was urged to go on. Bullet now rushed into the wild field of experiment, and struck out a gait of his own, that completely turned the tables upon his rider, and certainly deserved a patent. It seemed to have derived its elements from the jig, the minuet, and the cotillon. If it was not a pace, it certainly had *pace* in it; and no man would venture to call it anything else; so it passed off to the satisfaction of the owner.

"Walk him!"

Bullet was now at home again; and he walked as if money was staked on him.

The stranger, whose name I afterwards learned was Peter Ketch, having examined Bullet to his heart's content, ordered his son Neddy to go and bring up Kit. Neddy soon appeared upon Kit; a well-formed sorrel of the middle size, and in good order. His *tout ensemble* threw Bullet entirely in the shade: though a glance was sufficient to satisfy any one, that Bullet had the decided advantage of him in point of intellect.

"Why man," said Blossom, "do you bring such a hoss as that to trade for Bullet? Oh, I see you're no notion of trading."

"Ride him off, Neddy!" said Peter.

Kit put up at a handsome lope.

"Trot him back!"

Kit came in at a long, sweeping trot, and stopt suddenly at the crowd.

"Well," said Blossom, "let me look at him; maybe he'll do to plough."

"Examine him!" said Peter, taking hold of the bridle close to the mouth. "He's nothing but a tacky. He an't as *pretty* a horse as Bullet, I know; but he'll do. Start 'em together for a hundred and fifty *mile*; and if Kit an't twenty mile ahead of him at the coming out, any man may take Kit for nothing. But he's a monstrous mean horse, gentlemen; any man may see that. He's the scariest horse, too, you ever saw. He won't do to hunt on, no how. Stranger, will you let Neddy have your rifle to shoot off him? Lay the rifle between his ears, Neddy, and shoot at the blaze in that stump. Tell me when his head is high enough."

Ned fired, and hit the blaze: and Kit did not move a hair's breadth.

"Neddy, take a couple of sticks and beat on that hog'shead at Kit's tail."

Ned made a tremendous rattling; at which Bullet took fright, broke his bridle and dashed off in grand style; and would have stopt all further negotiations, by going home in disgust, had not a traveller arrested him and brought him back: but Kit did not move.

"I tell you, gentlemen," continued Peter, "he's the scariest horse you ever saw. He an't as gentle as Bullet; but he won't do any harm if you watch him. Shall I put him in a cart, gig, or wagon for you, stranger? He'll cut the same capers there he does here. He's a monstrous mean horse."

During all this time, Blossom was examining him with the nicest scrutiny. Having examined his frame and limbs, he now looked at his eyes.

"He's got a curious look out of his eyes," said Blossom.

"Oh yes, Sir," said Peter, "just as blind as a bat. Blind horses always have clear eyes. Make a motion at his eyes, if you please, Sir."

Blossom did so, and Kit threw up his head rather as if something pricked him under the chin, than as if fearing a

blow. Blossom repeated the experiment, and Kit jirked back with considerable astonishment.

"Stone blind, you see, gentlemen," proceeded Peter; "but he's just as good to travel of a dark night as if he had eyes."

"Blame my buttons," said Blossom, "if I like them eyes."

"No," said Peter, "nor I either. I'd rather have 'em made of diamonds; but they'll do, if they don't show as much white as Bullet's."

"Well," said Blossom, "make a pass at me."

"No," said Peter; "you made the banter, now make your pass."

"Well, I'm never afraid to price my hosses. You must give me twenty-five dollars boot."

"Oh certainly; say fifty, and my saddle and bridle in. Here, Neddy, my son, take away daddy's horse."

"Well," said Blossom, "I've made my pass, now you make yours."

"I'm for short talk in a horse swap; and therefore always tell a gentleman, at once, what I mean to do. You must give me ten dollars."

Blossom swore absolutely, roundly, and profanely, that he never would give boot.

"Well," said Peter, "I didn't care about trading; but you cut such high shines that I thought I'd like to back you out; and I've done it. Gentlemen, you see I've brought him to a hack."

"Come, old man," said Blossom, "I've been joking with you. I begin to think you do want to trade; therefore give me five dollars and take Bullet. I'd rather lose ten dollars any time, and not make a trade; though I hate to fling away a good hoss."

"Well," said Peter, "I'll be as clever as you are. Just put the five dollars on Bullet's back and hand him over, it's a trade."

Blossom swore again, as roundly as before, that he would not give boot; and, said he,

"Bullet wouldn't hold five dollars on his back nohow. But as I bantered you, if you say an even swap, here's at you."

"I told you," said Peter, "I'd be as clever as you; therefore here goes two dollars more, just for trade sake. Give me three dollars, and it's a bargain."

Blossom repeated his former assertion; and here the parties stood for a long time, and the by-standers (for many were now collected) began to taunt both parties. After some time, how-

ever, it was pretty unanimously decided that the old man had backed Blossom out.

At length Blossom swore he "never would be backed out for three dollars after bantering a man;" and accordingly they closed the trade.

"Now," said Blossom, as he handed Peter the three dollars, "I'm a man, that when he makes a bad trade, makes the most of it until he can make a better. I'm for no rues and after-claps."

"That's just my way," said Peter; "I never goes to law to mend my bargains."

"Ah, you're the kind of boy I love to trade with. Here's your hoss, old man. Take the saddle and bridle off him, and I'll strip yours; but lift up the blanket easy from Bullet's back, for he's a mighty tender-backed hoss."

The old man removed the saddle, but the blanket stuck fast. He attempted to raise it, and Bullet bowed himself, switched his tail, danced a little, and gave signs of biting.

"Don't hurt him, old man," said Blossom archly; "take it off easy. I am, perhaps, a leetle of the best man at a horse-swap that ever caught a 'coon."

Peter continued to pull at the blanket more and more roughly; and Bullet became more and more *cavortish*: in so much, that when the blanket came off, he had reached the *kick-ing* point in good earnest.

The removal of the blanket disclosed a sore on Bullet's back-bone that seemed to have defied all medical skill. It measured six full inches in length, and four in breadth; and had as many features as Bullet had motions. My heart sickened at the sight; and I felt that the brute who had been riding him in that situation deserved the halter.

The prevailing feeling however was that of mirth. The laugh became loud and general, at the old man's expense; and rustic witticisms were liberally bestowed upon him and his late purchase. These Blossom continued to provoke by various remarks. He asked the old man, "if he thought Bullet would let five dollars leave his back." He declared most seriously, that he had owned that horse three months, and had never discovered before that he had a sore back, "or he never should have thought of trading him," &c. &c.

The old man bore it all with the most philosophic composure. He evinced no astonishment at his late discovery, and made no replies. But his son, Neddy, had not disciplined his feelings quite so well. His eyes opened wider and wider, from the first to the last pull of the blanket; and when the whole sore burst

upon his view, astonishment and fright seemed to contend for the mastery of his countenance. As the blanket disappeared he stuck his hands in his breeches pockets, heaved a deep sigh, and lapsed into a profound reverie; from which he was only roused by the cuts at his father. He bore them as long as he could; and when he could contain himself no longer, he began with a certain wildness of expression, which gave a peculiar interest to what he uttered:

"His back's mighty bad off, but dod drot my soul if he's put it to daddy as bad as he thinks he has, for old Kit's both blind and *deef*, I'll be dod drot if he *cint*."

"The devil he is," said Blossom.

"Yes, dod drot my soul if he *cint*. You walk him and see if he *cint*. His eyes don't look like it; but he *jist as live go agin* the house with you, or in a ditch, as anyhow. Now you go try him."

The laugh was now turned on Blossom; and many rushed to test the fidelity of the little boy's report. A few experiments established its truth, beyond controversy.

"Neddy," said the old man, "you oughtn't to try and make people discontented with their things. Stranger, don't mind what the little boy says. If you can only get Kit rid of them little failings, you'll find him all sorts of a horse. You are a *leetle* the best man, at a horse swap, that ever I got hold of; but don't fool away Kit. Come, Neddy, my son, let's be moving; the stranger seems to be getting snappish."

XVIII.

THREE CHANCES FOR A WIFE.

WHEN a man has three chances for a wife, it is, indeed, a hard mischance if he should fail. The following is one of those cases which might have occurred down east, but I am rather doubtful if a similar event was ever known in any other part of the world. But let me give the experience of a gentleman, who had three chances, in his own language:

"I once courted a gal by the name of Deb Hawkins. I made it up to get married. Well, while we were going up to the deacon's, I stepped my foot into a mud puddle, and spat-tered the mud all over Deb Hawkins' new gown, made out of her grandmother's old chintz petticoat. Well when we got

to the deacon's, he asked Deb if she would take me for her lawful wedded husband?

"'No,' says she, 'I shan't do no such thing.'

"'What on airth is the reason?' says I.

"'Why,' says she, 'I've taken a mislikin' to you.'

"Well, it was all up with me then, but I give her a string of beads, a few kisses, some other notions, and made it all up with her; so we went up to the deacon's a second time. I was determined to come up to her this time, so when the deacon asked me if I would take her for my lawfully wedded wife, says I,

"'No, I shan't do no such thing.'

"'Why,' says Deb, 'what on airth is the matter?'

"'Why,' says I, 'I have taken a mislikin' to you now.'

"Well there it was all up again, but I gave her a new apron, and a few other little trinkets, and we went up again to get married. We expected then we would be tied so fast that all nature couldn't separate us, and when we asked the deacon if he wouldn't marry us he said,

"'No, I shan't dew any such thing.'

"'Why, what on airth is the reason?' says we.

"'Why,' says he, 'I've taken a mislikin' to both on you.'

"Deb burst out cryin', the deacon burst out scoldin', and I burst out laughin', and sich a set of reg'lar busters you never did sec."

XIX.

THE YANKEE AMONGST THE MERMAIDS.

A YARN, BY A CAPE CODDER.

Do I b'leve in the sea-sarpint? You might as well ax me if I b'leved in the compass, or thought the log could lie. I've never seed the critter myself, cos I haint cruised in them waters as he locates himself in, not since I started on my first voyage in the 'Confidence' whaler, Captain Coffing; but I recking I've got a brother as hails from Nahant, that sees him handsome every year, and knows the latitude and longitude of the beast, just as well as I knows the length o' the futtock shrouds o' the foretops.

Did *you* ever see a marmaid? Waell, then, I reckon

you'd best shut up, cos *I* have, and many on 'em; and marmen too, and marmisses and marmasters, of all sizes, from babbies not bigger nor mackrels to regular six-footers, with starns like a full-grow'd porpus. I've been at a marmaid's tea-party, and after larnin' the poor ignorant scaly critters how to splice the main-brace, I left the hull bilin' on 'em blazin' drunk.

You see, when our craft was cruisin' up the Arches, we cast anchor one mornin' in pretty deep water, just abrest of a small green island as wasn't down in the chart, and hadn't got no name, nyther. But our captin' know'd what he was arter, abeout as right as ninepence, cos a small skewner came alongside pretty sune, freighted with brandy and wine for the officers, what they'd ordered for their own private stores. Waell, the slings were run up to the end o' the main-yard, and the waisters were busy hoistin' up the barrils, when a cask o' brandy slipped from the slings as it was being cantied round, and dropt right splash into the sea, sinkin' right away. Upon 'zaminationg the manifest, it proved to be the best cask o' brandy in the skewner, imported from Boardo direct for the captin' himself.

"You eternal lazy suckers," said he; "look here! take all the boats' anchors, lash 'em together in tews so as to form grapnels o' four pints each, and drag all about here for that ar' brandy—and mind you find it, or I'll put every mother's son of you on short allowance o' rye for the next month."

Waell, the boats were ordered out, and a gropin' we went. I was placed in the jolly, with Sy Davis and Pete Slinks, and a middy to direct. The middy was a pretty considerable smart fellow, and jest as we was puttin' off, he nodded up to the chaplin as was leanin' over the side, and says,

"What say you to an hour's float upon this here glassy sea?"

The parson was down by the main ropes in a minit, and off we sot a fishin' for the brandy tub.

The current run pretty slick by the side o' the little island, and the seond luff, who was in the cutter, ordered us to go a-head and watch along the shore jest to see if the tub warn't rolled up there by the tide. We pretended to look right hard for the tub, till we made the lee o' the island, and then if we didn't resolve to take it easy and run the noose o' the jolly into the yaller sand o' the shore, there ain't no snakes. I held on in the starn by the grapnel, and the parson pulled out of his pocket a good-sized sample bottle o' the new stuff as he'd jest bought, and wanted the middy to taste

—and arter passin' their ideas on the licker, the chaplin gave us men a pretty stiff horn a piece, now I tell you and first-rate it was, I swow. It iled the parson's tongue like all out doors—it took him to talk—all about the old original anteeck names o' the islands that laid in spots all about thar'—classic ground, as he called it, and a pretty yarn he did spin tew.

Then the middy, who'd been keepin' dark and layin' low all this time, show'd his broughtens-up, and let fly a hull broadside at the parson about them ar' syringes and other fabbilus winnimg.

Waell, you see, all this here talk made us dry as thunder; so the chaplin said he guessed the sun was over the fore-yard, and baled us out another horn o' licker all round. Then he took a "speil ho!" at the jawin' tackle, and allowed there was a river in Jarminy, where all our Dutch imegrants bails from, and that a naked gall used to locate herself in a whirlpool, and come up on moonshiney nights and sing a hull bookful o' songs, as turned the heads o' all the young fellers in them parts. Waell, reports ruz up as she'd a hull cargo o' gold stowed away at the bottom o' the whirlpool, and many a wild young Jarman, seduced by the gall's singin' and hopes o' gold, lept into the river, and warn't heerd on never arter. These matters hurt the young gall's kariter, and the old folks, who'd always allowed that she was a kind of goddess, began to think that she warn't the clear grit, and the young fellers said her singin' was no great shakes, and that her beauty warn't the thing it was cracked up to be.

There was a famous general, who wasn't raised in that section o' the country, but had swapped a castle on a mountain in Spain for one o' them ar' water lots near the whirlpool; he began to find himself rayther short o' cash to buy his groceries, and concluding that he couldn't dew without a leetle whiskey to keep off the aguy, resolved to pay the whirlpool gall a visit, and jest see if he couldn't soft soap the young critter out of a leetle rhino. Next full moon, he tortles to the bluff what hung over the bilin' and foammin' river, and jest at eight bells, up ruz the gall, stark naked, a sittin' on the white froth o' the whirlin' water, and singin', "Wont you come to my bower what I've shaded for you?"

"Waell," says the ginerel, not a bit daunted—says he, "look here, my gall: I mean to eat a lobster salad with you to-night, if you promise to behave like a lady, and won't cut up no shines."

Waell, the gall give her word o' honour, and the ginerel dove into the whirlpool, and down they went right slick.

Next mornin', the ginerall was found to hum with a sighter old gold pieces, bigger round than the top of a backer-box, and a hull pot full of the tallest kind of jewels; you see, the sojer had carried a small flask of Monongahely in his pocket, and the river gall couldn't git over the old rye—few glasses opened her heart, I guess, and she let the ginerall slip his cable in the mornin' with just about as much gold as he could stow away.

Some o' his friends kalkilated as he'd better drop his anchor thar' agin—and there was some talk in the settlement of formin' a jynt-stock company for the purpose o' gettin' up all the gold—but the ginerall tell'd 'em he guessed he'd got enough for him, and he seed quite enough down thar' not to want to go no more; and refusin' to say what he had seen, or tell 'em how they was to go to work, it kinder stopped the jynt-stock company.

The river gall she fell quite in love with the ginerall right up to the hub, and sot on the bilin' water night arter night, singin', "Meet me by moonlight alone;" but the ginerall said he'd see her drowned first afore he trust her agin—for, says he, "No woman was never deceived twyst," which riled the river gall like mad, and in revenge she sot the whirlpool a bilin' like all creation, as if resolved to keep the neighbourhood in hot water. From the sarcumstance of the ginerall's gettin' so much gold out o' the river, the Jarmins called it the Rhino, and its been known by somethin' like that name ever since.

When the chaplain had expended his yarn, he sarved out another allowance o' licker. I recking that he was the raal grit for a parson—always doin' as he'd be done by, and practisin' a darned sight more than he preached. "Taint Christian-like," says he, "to drink by one's self, and a raal tar never objects to share his grog with a shipmate." Them's gin-a-wine Bunker Hill sentiments, and kinder touch the bottom of a sailor's heart!

The middy then uncoiled another length o' cable about the fabelus wimming o' the sea, and said it were a tarnation pretty idea, that them angels from hevving as ruled the airth should keep watch over the treasures o' the water. Then he telled a yarn consarnin' the captin' of a marchantman as was trading in the South Seas, layin' at anchor, becalmed, one Sunday mornin' about five bells, when a strange hail was heard from under the bows o' the craft, and the hands on deck as answered the hail seed somebody in the water with jest his head and arms stickin' out, and holdin' on to the

dolphing striker. Waell, I guess they pretty soon throw'd him a rope and hauled him aboard, and then they seed he was a regular built marman, one half kinder nigger, and t'other half kinder fish, but altogether more kinder fish than kinder nigger. So, as I was tellin' you, they got him aboard, and he made an enquerry arter the captin, who come out o' his cabin, and the marman made him a first-rate dancin'-skeul bow, and says in ginnewine English:

"Captin, I sorter recking it ain't entered into your kalendar as this here is Sabber-day, for you've dropped your tarnal big anchor right in front o' our meetin'-house door, and our folks can't go to prayers."

Waell, the captin was rayther taken aback, and the calm, you see, overlayin' him in that thar' hot latitude, had sot his back up above a bit; and besides that, he felt considerable strecked at bein' roused out o' his mornin's nap for nothin'; so, altogether he felt sorter wolfish, and lookin' at the stranger darning savagerous, says,

"Who in creation are *you*?"

This here speech put the marman's dander up, for he says right sassy,

"I guess I'm appinted deacon over all the marmans and marmads in these here parts, and I'll jest trouble you to treat me with the respect due *tew* a strannger and a gentleman."

Waell, I recking the captin's ebeneser *was* roused, for he seized hold of a harpoon that was layin' on the fowksell, and hollered to the marman:

"You fishy vaggybund, make tracks out o' my ship, you sammony-tailed son of a sea-cook, or I'll drive the grains slick through your sealy carkiss, I will."

Waell, the critter seein' as the captin meant dannger, made but one flop with his tail, and skeeted over the side o' the ship into the water. The captin did not weigh anchor, nor nothin', only during the night the cable was cut by the marmen, and the ship drifted on *tew* a korril reef, and rubbed a tarnal big hole in her plankin'.

"That's a good yarn," said the parson, "and I b'leve it's true as gospel. Nothin's impossible in natur', and the hull o' these strarge fixins as we hear tell on, is nothin' more than links in the almighty great chain cable of universal natur'. Bats is the link o' betweenity as connects the natures o' fowls o' the air and the beasts o' the field. Seals and alligators links the natures o' beasts and fishes. Babboons and apes links beasts with humans; and why should not marmads be

the links between humans and the fishes o' the sea? But there's the signal for the boat's return; here's jest a little horn a piece in the bottle—let's lick'er one more round, and then absquatle."

We pulled quietly back to the ship. The barrel of brandy had not been found, and I wish I may be sniggered if the captin' did not fly into the biggest kind o' quarter-deck passion I ever did see. He stormed great guns and fired hull broadsides at the boats' crews, swearin' that they should keep on dredgin' till the tub was found, if it was the day arter eternity. So, you see, the hands was piped to dinner, but I was ordered tew keep in the boats and take care they didn't stave each other.

Waell, I laid down in the captin's gig, and what with the parson's lick'er, and the talk about marmalades, and syringes, and water-galls, and one thing and t'other, a very pretty muss began mixin' in my brain pan. So, as I was layin' comfortably moored in the stern sheets, with my head a leetle over the boat's quarter, I thought it highly unwrong that the brandy tub hadn't been fatched up, and that the men usin' the grapnels must have shirked as we did, cos, if they'd sarched as they oughter, they must have seed the barrel, for the water was so petickler clear that you could dissarn the crabs crawlin' over the korril rocks at the bottom o' twenty fathom.

Waell, while I was lookin' into the ocean to see if I could light upon the barrell, a leetle o' the largest fish I ever did see come and swum right close to the bottom of the sea, jest under the boats. Then it kept risin' and risin', til I seed its long fins were shaped like men's arms; and when it come near the sarfis, it turned on its back, and then I seed a human face! I know'd at once that it was a marmalade, or a marman, or one o' them amfibberus critters called fabelus syringes, as the chaplain had been spinnin' his yarns about. So, the critter popt its head up jest above the water, which was smooth as glass, and a little smoother tew by a darned sight, and jest as clear and jest as shiny, and says he to me:

"Look here, strannger, you and your shipmates aint doin' the genteel thing to me nohow you can fix it, for they're playing old hub with my garding grounds and oyster beds by scratchin' and rakin' 'em all over with them ar' darned anchors and grapnel fixins, in a manner that's harrowin' to my feelins. If the captin' wants his thundernation lick'er tub, let him just send eeny decent Christian down with me, and I'll gin it him."

Waell, I'm not goin' to say that I didn't feel kinder skeered, but the chaplain's yarns had rubbed the rough edge off, and the notion o' findin' the captin's cask pleased me mightily, cos I knowed it would tickle the old man like all creation, and sartinly get me three or four liberty days for shore goin' when we returned to Port Mahon. So, as I hadn't on nothin' petikler as would spile, only a blue cotting shirt and sail-cloth pantys, and the weather bein' most uncommon warm, I jest told the marman I was ready, and tortled quietly over the boat's side into the blue transparent sea.

The marman grappled me by the fist, and we soon touched bottom, now I tell ye. I found as I could walk easy enough, only the water swayed me abeout jest as if I war a leetle tight, but I didn't seem to suifer nothin' from want o' breath, nyther.

We soon reached whar' the brandy cask was lyin' right under the ship's keel, which accounts for its not bein' seen nor nothin' by the boats' crews. I felt so everlastingly comical abeout findin' the tub, that I told the half-bred dolphing fellow that pinte it out, that if I knowed how to tap it, I wish I might die if I wouldn't give him a gallon o' the stuff as a salvage fee.

"What's in it?" says the marman.

"Why, lickin'," says I.

"Waell," says the marman, "so I heerd them scrapin' fellers in the boats say; but I guess I've lickin' enough to last my time, tho' I reckin your lickin' is something stronger than salt water, seein' that its hooped up in that almighty way."

"Why, you lubber," says I, "it's brandy—the raal ginne-wine coneyhack."

"And what's that?" says the marman.

"Why, dew tell—want to know?" says I; "have you lived to your time o' life without tastin' spirretus lickin'? Waell, I swow, you oughter be the commodore of all them cold water clubs, and perpetual president of all temp'rance teetotallers. Go ahead, matey; pilot the way to your shanty, and I'll roll the barrel arter you. I'll sune give you a drink o' lickin' that will jest take the shirt-tail off eeny thing you ever did taste, now I tell you."

Waell, the critter flopped ahead, for you see its the natur' o' the marmen, seein' as they've no legs, only a fish's tail what's bent under them, jest like the lower part o' the letter J, to make way by floppin' their starns up and down, and paddlin' with their hands—somethin' between a swim and a

swagger—but the way they get through the water is a caution. I rolled the tub along over the smooth white shiny sand, and the crabs and lobsters skeeted off right and left sides out o' my way regular skeered, and big fishes of all shapes and makes, with bristlin' fins, swum close alongside me, and looked at me quite awful with their small gooseberry eyes, as much as to say, "What the nation *are* you at?"

Byneby the marman brought up in front of rayther a largeish cave or grotto of rock and shell work, kivered with korril and sea-weed. So, you see, the tub was put right on eend in one corner; I made an enquiry o' the marman if he had a gimblet, and he said he b'leved there was such a thing in the hold or cellar; he'd found a carpenter's tool-chest in a wreck a few miles to the easterd, and he fotched away six or seving of the leetle fixins, thinkin' they might be useful to hum—so, he opened the back door and hailed a young marman to bring him the gimblet.

Seein' as there was no benches nor nothin' to sit down on, which marmen and marmaids don't desire, cos they've no sittin' parts to their bodies, which is all fish from their waistbands, I jest sot on the top o' the brandy tub, and took an observation of the critter before me. His face was reglar human, only it looked rayther tawney and flabby like a biled nigger, with fishy eyes, and a mouth like a huge tom cod. His hair hung stret down his shoulders, and was coarse and thick, like untwisted rattlin'; his hands were somethin' like a goose's paw, only the fingers were longer and thicker; and his body was not exactly like an Injin's nor a nigger's, nor a white man's—nor was it yaller, nor blue, nor green—but a sorter altogether kinder mixed up colour, lookin' as if it were warranted to stand the weather. Jest abeout midships, his body was tucked into a fish's belly, with huge green scales right down to the tail.

Whilst I was surveyin' the marman fore and aft, the back door opened, and a she critter flopped in, with a young marman at the breast. The leetle sucker was not bigger than a pickerel, with a tail of a delicate sammon colour, and a head and body jest like one o' them small tan monkeys, with a face as large as a dollar. The marman introduced the she critter as his wife, and we soon got into a coil of talk right slick, all abeout the weather, and the keare and trouble o' a young family—and I wish I may be swamped if the marmaid warn't a dreadful nice critter to chatter. Like all wimming folk, she was plaguey kewrous as to whar' I was raised and rigged—and when I said I guess I hailed from Cape Cod, and

all along shore thar', she looked at the marman, and said to me,

"Wae'll, I never—Cape Cod! why, strannger, I guess there must be some finny in our breeds."

Wae'll, you see, I grew rayther kewrous tew, and wanted to log the petiklers o' the nateral history o' the race o' mar-men—so I made a few enquerries respectin' their ways o' life.

"I guess," says I, "you've a tarnal good fish market in these here parts, and keep your table well supplied with hal-libut and sea-bass, and black-fish, eh?"

"Why, strannger," says the marman, rayther wrathly, "seein' its you I won't be offended, or, by hevving, if that speech ain't enough to make a marman feel scaly, why then it ain't no matter. We claim to be half fish in our natur', and I reckon you don't kalkilate we gobbles our relations? there's sea varmint enough in all conscience, sitch as oysters, and clams, and quahogs, and muscles, and crabs, and lobsters. We go the hull shoat with them; and then we cultivates kail and other sea truck in our gardings, and sometimes we swims under the wild fowl as they're floatin', and jerks down a fine duck or a gull, or gathers their eggs off the rocks, or the barnacles off drift wood."

Jest then, the marman's eldest son-fish fotched in the gimblet, and brought up the marman's jawin' tacks with a round turn. The young un was about the size of an Injin boy jest afore he runs alone—half papoose, half porpus. He got a lettle skeered when he clapt eyes on me, but I gave him a stale quid o' backer to amuse himself, and the sugar plum made the marmaster roll his eyes above a bit, now I tell you.

Wae'll, I bored a hole in the brandy tub, and pickin' up an empty clam-shell, handed a drink to the lady, and told her to tote it down. She swaller'd it pretty slick, and the way she gulped afterwards, and stared, and twisted her fishy mouth, was a sin to Davy Crockett. The marman looked rayther wolfy at me, as if I'd gin her pison; so I drewed a shell-full and swallowed it myself. This kinder cooled him down, and when the marmaid got her tongue tackle in runnin' order agin, she said she guessed the licker was the juice of hevving, and she'd be darned if she wouldn't have another drink right off the reel.

Seein' this, the marman swallowed his dose, and no sooner got it down than he squealed right out, and clapped his webby hands together, and wagged his tail like all creation. He swore it was elegant stuff, and he felt it tickle powerful

from the top of his head to the eend of his starn-fin. Arter takin' two or three horns together, the sonny cried for a drink, and I gin him one that sent him wrigglin' on the sand like an eel in an uneasiness. So the marman said as the lickier was raal first-rate, and first-rater than that tew, he guessed he'd ask in his next-door neighbour and his lady, jest to taste the godsend. Waell, in a minnit, in comes a huge marman of the most almighty size, looking jest like Black Hawk when he was bilious; he fotched up his lady with him, and his eldest son, a scraggy hobbadehoy marman, and his darters, two young marmails or marmisses, jest goin' out o' their teens, who flapped their yaller-skinned paws over their punking-coloured chops, pretendin' to be almighty skeered at comin' afore a strannge man in a state o' natur—but they forgot all abeout that thar' when the lickier was handed to them.

Arter takin' a few smallers, the fresh marman said he guessed the clam-shell was altogether tew leetle to get a proper amount of lickier whereby a feller could judge correctly of the raal taste o' the stuff—so he went to his berth in the next cave, and fotched a large blue and silver shell that held about a pint.

The news o' the brandy-tub spred pretty slick, for in half an hour, I'd the hull grist o' the marmen belongin' to that settlement cooped up in the cavern. Sitch a noisy swillin' set o' wet souls I never did see; the drunk com' on em almighty strong, for they kept me sarvin' out the lickier jest as quick as it would run. I thought if the captin' could have seen me astridin' his brandy-cask, in an under-ground grocery at the bottom o' the sea, surrounded by sich a skeul of odd fish, how many dozen at the gangway would he have ordered the bosen's mate to have sarved me out?

The way the drunk affected the different critters' s right kewrous, now I tell you. One great scaly feller stannened his tail all up, and stood poppindickler erect on the peaked pints of the cend fin, like a jury-mast, and jawed away raal dignified at all the rest, wantin' them to appoint him a sort o' admiral over the hull crew. Another yellier feller, with a green tail, was so dreadful blue, that he doubled himself into a figgery 5, and sung scraps and bits o' all sorts o' sea songs, till he got tew drunk to speak at all. Some o' the marmen wanted to kiss all the marmails, and tew o' the ladies begun scratchin' and fightin' like two pusseys, cos one trod on t'other's tail. Some went floppin' and dancin' on the sand like mad, raisin' sitch a dust that I could not see to draw the lickier—

but the party round the tub soon druv' them to the right about, as interferin' with the interest o' the settlement. Every minnit some fresh marman dropped on the ground with the biggest kind of load on; I never seed a set o' critters so almighty tight, yellin', swearin', huggin', and fightin', till they growed so darned savagerous that I kinder feared for my own safety amongst them drunken moffradite sea aborgoines. So, you see, I up and told them that I'd clapt my veto on the licker, and that they should not have any more.

Waell, if ever you did hear a most etarnal row, or see a hull raft o' drunken fellers cut didoes, then *was* the time. It was voted that I were a public enemy, and every half-drunk marman suddenly become very 'fishus to have me Lynched, and it were settled at last that I were to be rode on a rail, and then tarred and feathered. But, while some o' the varmint went arter the rail and the tar, the rest o' the critters begun quarrelin' who was to sarve out the licker; and as each marman, drunk or sober, wanted to have the keare o' the precious stuff, they soon raised a pretty muss, and kept on tearin' at each other like a pack o' wolves. Seein' this, I jest kinder sneaked quietly away from the cave grocery till I com' in sight o' the ship, when I struck upperd for the sarfis, and swum for dear life. I soon seed that the boats' crew were musterin' for another bout o' draggin' for the brandy-cask; so, fearin' least the captin' should miss me, I jest laid hold o' the edge o' the gig, and crawled in pretty quickly, and laid myself down in the starn-sheets, as if I'd never been out o' the boat.

I hadn't laid thar' half a second, when I heerd a noise jest for all the world as if somebody was squeezin' a small thunder cloud right over my head. I ruz up, and thar' were the captin' and the hull crew lookin' over the ship's side at me—the officers in a tarnal rage, and the men grinnin' like so many hyenas.

"Rouse up, you long-sided lazy swab, and bring the boats in from the boom. Are you goin' to sleep all day?"

"Ay, ay, Sir," said I, jumpin' up in the boat, when all the water run off me like forty thousand mill-streams—I'd been so outrageous soaked while down with the marmen. I felt kinder skeered lest the captin' should see it, but when I stood up he laughed right out, and so did the hull crew tew.

"Why, he's not awake yet," said the captin'. "Bosen, give him another bucket."

You see they wanted to persuade me that I'd fell asleep in the gig, as fast as a meetin' house, and slept thar' the hull

while the crew were at dinner, and that no shoutin' nor nothin' couldn't wake me up—so, the bosen run along the boom and jest give me a couple o' buckets o' sea-water right over me. When I told 'em my yarn about the marman poppin' up his head, and invitin' me down, and all about findin' the brandy-tub and the rest, they swore that I'd got drunk on the parson's licker, and dreamt it all in the boat. But I guess I know what I did see, jest about as slick as anybody; and the chaplain b'lieved the hull story; and said that as I'd learnt the marmen the valley o' licker, they'd get huntin' up all the tubs and barrels out of the different wrecks in all the various seas; and that intemperance would spile the race, and thin 'em off till they became one o' the things that was—jest like the Injins what's wastin' away by the power o' rum and whiskey given 'em by the white men.

I recking the parson warn't far out in his kalkilashin'. The love o' licker has had its effect upon the marmen and the marmads; they must have thinned off surprisin'ly, for I ain't seed none since, nor I don't know nobody that has nyther.

XX.

CAPTAIN STICK AND TONEY.

CAPTAIN STICK was a remarkably precise old gentleman, and a conscientiously just man. He was, too, very methodical in his habits, one of which was to keep an account in writing of the conduct of his servants, from day to day. It was a sort of account-current, and he settled by it every Saturday afternoon. No one dreaded these hebdomadal balancings more than Toney, the boy of all-work; for the Captain was generally obliged to write a receipt, for a considerable amount, across his shoulders.

One settling afternoon, the Captain, accompanied by Toney, was seen "toddling" down to the old stable, with his little account-book in one hand, and a small rope in the other. After they had reached the "Bar of Justice," and Toney had been properly "strung up," the Captain proceeded to state his accounts, as follows:

"*Toney, Dr.*

"Sabbath, to not half blacking my boots, &c., five stripes.

"Tuesday, to staying four hours at mill longer than necessary, ten stripes.

"Wednesday, to not locking the hall door at night, five stripes.

"Friday, to letting the horse go without water, five stripes.

"Total, twenty-five stripes.

"*Toney Cr.*

"Monday, by first-rate day's work in the garden, ten stripes.

"Balance due, fifteen stripes."

The balance being thus struck, the Captain drew his cowhide and remarked:

"Now, Toney, you black scamp, what say you, you lazy villain, why I shouldn't give you fifteen lashes across your back, as hard as I can draw?"

"Stop, old Massa," said Toney; "dar's de work in de garden, Sir—dat ought to tek off some."

"You black dog," said the Captain, "havn't I given you the proper credit of ten stripes for that? Come, come!"

"Please, old Massa," said Toney, rolling his eyes about in agony of fright, "dar's—you forgot—dar's de scourin' ob de floor—old missus say e nebber been scour as good before."

"Soho, you saucy rascal," quoth Captain Stick; "you're bringing in more off-sets, are you? Well, now, there!"—here the Captain made an entry upon his book—"you have a credit of five stripes and the balance must be paid."

"Gor a mity, Massa, don't hit yet—dar's sumpen else—oh, Lord! please don't—yes, Sir—got um now—ketchin' de white boy and fetchin' um to ole missus, what trow rock at de young duck."

"That's a fact," said the Captain, "the outrageous young vagabond!—that's a fact, and I'll give you credit of ten stripes for it—I wish you had brought him to me—now we'll settle the balance."

"Bress de Lord, ole Massa," said Toney, "*dat's all!*"

Toney grinned extravagantly.

The Captain adjusted his tortoise-shell spectacles with great exactness, held the book close to his eyes, and ascertained that the fact was as stated by Toney. He was not a little irritated.

"You swear off the account, you infernal rascal!—you swear off the account, do you?"

"All de credit is fair, old Massa," answered Toney.

"Yes, but—" said the disappointed Captain, "but—but"

still the Captain was sorely puzzled how to give Toney a *few licks anyhow*, "but—" an idea popped into his head, "*where's my costs*, you incorrigible, abominable scoundrel? You want to swindle me, do you, out of my costs, you black, deceitful rascal! And," added Captain Stick, chuckling as well at his own ingenuity, as the perfect justice of the sentence, "I enter judgment against you for costs—ten stripes!" and forthwith administered the stripes and satisfied the judgment.

"Ki nigger!" said Toney; "ki nigger! what dis judgment for coss, ole Massa talk 'bout. Done git off 'bout not blackin' de boot—git off 'bout stayin' long time at de mill—and ebry ting else; but dis judgment for coss gim me de debil! Bress God, nigger must keep out ob de ole stable, or I'll tell you what, dat *judgmen' for coss* make e back feel mighty warm, for true!"

XXI.

THE WAY BILLY HARRIS DROVE THE DRUM-FISH TO MARKET.

THE afternoon of a still, sultry day, found us at the Bank-head spring, on Choptico Bay, Maryland—Billy Harris, old "Blair," and myself. Billy was seated on the head of his canoe, leisurely discussing a bone and a slice of bread, the remnant of his mid-day's repast on the river; old "Blair" was busily engaged in overhauling and arranging the fish that he had taken in the course of the morning: while I, in a state of half-listlessness, half-doziness, was seated on the trunk of an uprooted cedar near the spring, with my head luxuriously reclining against the bank.

"Well, this is about as pooty a fish as I've had the handling ov for some time," remarked old "Blair," holding up and surveying with much satisfaction a rock about two feet and a half in length.

"Smart rock that," said Billy, as he measured the fish with his eye. "What an elegint team a couple o' dozen o' that size would make!"

"Elegint *what*, Mr Harris?" inquired old "Blair," depositing the fish under the bushes in the bow of his canoe, and turning round towards Billy.

"Why, an elegint team for a man to travel with," replied

Billy. "Did I never tell you 'bout my driving the drums to the Alexandri' market?" he added, at the same time casting a furtive glance in the direction of the spot where I was seated.

"Well, I've hearn a right smart of your exploits, Mr Harris, in our meetin's down here on the bay," said "Blair," "but I don't remember ov hearin' you tell about that."

"The fact is," said Billy, "it's a little out o' the usual run o' things, and it's not every one that I care about telling it to. Some people are so hard to make believe, that there's no satisfaction in telling them anything; seeing it's you, though, Lewis, I don't mind relating that little spree—specially as the tide won't serve us up the narrows for some time yet, and Mr —, there, seems inclined to do a little napping. Well, to begin at the beginning," he continued, as old "Blair" assumed the attitude of an attentive listener at the head of his canoe, "it's just seven years ago the tenth day of this here last month, that I went down to the drumming-ground off the salt-works to try my luck among the thumpers. I know'd the gents were about, for I'd heard 'em drumming the day before while I was out rocking on the outer eend o' Mills's; so I got everything ready the over night, and by an hour by sun the next morning I had arrived upon the ground, ready for action. For the first half-hour or so I done nothing. Sometimes an old chanu'ler or a greedy cat would pay his respects to my bait in a way that would make my heart jump up into my mouth, and get me kind o' excited like, but that was all. Devil the drum ever condescended to favour me with a nibble. A'ter a while I begun to get tired o' that kind o' sport, and concluded that I'd just up-stake and shove a little nearer in shore. Just as I was preparing to pull in my line, though, I spied a piece o' pine bark 'bout twenty yards off, floating down towards me. 'Now,' says I, 'gents, I'll give you until that bit of bark passes my line, to bite in, and if you don't think proper to do it in that time, you may breakfast as you can—I'll not play the waiting-boy any longer.' Well, the piece of bark got right off against my line without my getting so much as a nibble, and I begun wind up; but I hadn't got more'n a foot or so o' the line outer the water, when I felt something give me a smart tug. At first I thought it might be a crab or an oyster-shell that I'd hooked, but presently my line begun to straighten under a strong, steady pull, and then I know'd what was about. I give one sangorous jerk, and the dance commenced."

"What was it—a drum?" inquired old "Blair," a little eagerly.

"Yes, a drum, and a regular scrouger, at that. I wish you had only been there, Lewis, to see the fun. Of all the hard fish to conquer that ever I took in hand, that chap was the Major. I got him alongside at last, though, and lifted him in. I then run a rope through his gills, and sent him overboard agin, makin' the two ends of the line fast to a staple in the stern o' the boat, just behind me.

"Well, this put me in first-rate spirits, and out went my line agin in the twinklin' of an eye. Before it had time to touch the bottom, it was jerked through my hand for the matter of a yard or so, and then cum another interestin' little squabble. Just as I got that chap to the top o' the water, 'way went t'other line!"

"My patience!" exclaimed old "Blair," who had probably never taken a drum in the whole course of his life, "*two goin' at once?*"

"Yes, *two at once.*"

"And did you save 'em both, Mr Harris?"

"Save 'em!" said Billy; "did you ever know me to lose a fish arter I'd once struck him?"

"Well, exceptin' that big rock this mornin'," replied "Blair," as a scarcely perceptible smile crept over his ebony visage, "I don't remember as I ever did."

"But that, you know, was the fault o' the hook—the beard wasn't quite long enough," said Billy. "But to come back to the drums," he continued, quickly. "In about three hours from the time I staked down I had no less than thirty-nine fine fish floating at the eend o' my little corner; so I concluded that I'd just up-stake, and make a-push for the narrows.

"But how am I to get the drums along?" said I to myself; 'that's the next question. If I take 'em in the boat, I shall be swamped to a certainty; and if I undertake to tow 'em straight up the river, it's a school o' pilchers to a single crocus that I'm run away with.'

"A'ter debating the matter for a little while with myself, I concluded that I'd just shove in quietly towards the land, until I got into shoal water, and then follow the shore. So I bent over as easy as I could, pulled up the stake, and commenced shoving along; but no sooner did the drums feel themselves moving through the water, than they turned tack, and, with a flirt of their tails, dashed smack off down the river, like so many terrified colts."

"Thar, bless the Lord!" ejaculated old "Blair," suddenly rising from his seat, and then resuming it again.

"My first thought," continued Billy, "was to cut the rope, and let the whole batch of 'em go; but on turning round for that purpose, I found that the stern of the boat was buried so low in the water, that a little stream was beginning to run over the top; so I jist travelled to the other eend of the boat, and tried to bear down. But the thing wasn't to be done so easy. The drums had taken the bit between their teeth, and were pulling down with a regular forty-horse power. Seeing no other way of saving myself from the crabs, I just got a-straddle o' the boat, and worked my way backwards, until I reached the last half inch o' the bow, and there I sot, with my legs dangling in the water, 'till the gents begun to cool down, and come to the top. By this time we had got over Cobb Bar, and the drums were looking straight up the Potomac. I never knowed how to account for it, but just then a queer notion struck me:

"'Spouse, now,' said I to myself, 'I was to take these chaps in hand, and drive 'em to Alexandri'; wouldn't it be something to talk about when I got back!'

"The thing sorter pleased me, and I determined to try it, come what might of it. So I reached down, and got hold o' my drum-line, and carefully doubled it. I then got down into the boat, and crawled along on my hands and knees to the other eend o' the corner, where the drums were, and looked over. Finding that they were all moving along quietly, I tied my line to the two eends o' the rope that they were fastened with, and then cut the rope loose from the staple. This made the reirs about twenty-five yards long, but I only let out about one-half ov 'em. I was afraid, you see, if I give the gents too much play room, that they might get into tantrums, and give me more trouble. Seeing, arter a while, though, that I could manage 'em pretty well, I just wound the line round my left hand, picked up my angel rod for a whip, took my seat in the stern of the boat, and told 'em to travel. And *didn't* they travel! I wish you could only have seen me, Lewis. Old Neption, that Mr —, there, sometimes tells about, wasn't a circumstance. I had a thundering big red drum in the lead, and nineteen as pretty matches o' black ones following after, as ever a man could wish to look at; and they all moved along as nicely as so many well-broke carriage-horses. It's true, a chap would sometimes become a little fractious, like, and sheer off towards the Ma'yland or Virginny shore, but I'd just fetch a draw on t'other tack, and give him a slight touch with the rod near the back fin, and he'd fall into line agin as beautiful as could be. Well, Lewis, to make a long story short, it

was about ten o'clock in the day when I took the gentlemen in hand, and by three hours by the sun that evening I pitched the reins over one o' the posts on the Alexandri' wharf. A crowd o' people had collected together to see me land, and as the thing ov a man's drivin' fish to market seemed to tickle 'em, I soon sold out my whole team, at a dollar and a half a head. I at first thought of holding on to about half a dozen ov 'em to travel home with; but as I expected they were pretty well tired out, and the wind happened to be fair, I bought me a sail, laid in a supply ov eatables, and a jug of the best old rye that ever tickled a man's throat" (a slight working of old "Blair's" mouth was here perceptible), "and at day-break the next morning was snoozing it away nicely under my own shingles at home."

"Didn't you see no steam-boats, nor nothin', on your way up, Mr Harris?" inquired old "Blair."

"Oh yes," said Billy. "'Bout twenty miles this side o' Alexandri' I met the old Colum'bria coming down under a full head o' steam. She was crowded with people, and as I passed close along by the wheel-house, and bowed my head to 'em, they all clapped their hands and hollered mightily. I hearn afterwards that the captain, or somebody else, had it all put in the papers, but I can't say from my own knowledge whether it was so or not. I also overtook two or three brigs, but didn't stop to talk—just give 'em a nod, and passed on."

"My patience!" exclaimed old "Blair," "well you *was* a travellin'."

"Just t'other side o' Nangem'y Reach, too," continued Billy, "I fell in with a sa'cy little pungy, that brushed up alongside, and seemed inclined to keep company. As the wind happened to freshen up just then, I couldn't get away from her nohow; and the son of a blood of a captin kept bearing me in towards the land until he got me almost right upon a long bar before I know'd it. As the water was several feet deep at the eend of the bar, the pungy could pass right by it without touching; so I had either to cross the bar or go round the pungy. It was a desperate undertaking to try the bar, for 'bout a yard or so wide it was perfectly bare; but I couldn't think of being beat, so I just stood up in the boat, gathered the line well together in my hands, and with a whoop to the drums, rushed 'em at it."

"And did you *raily* cross it, Mr Harris?" said "Blair," a little staggered.

"Without turning a shell," replied Billy.

"And what became o' the pungy?"

"Why in a little while the wind died away, and she dropped behind, and I saw nothing more of her. I reckon it mad the captin open his eyes though, to see the way I crossed the bar. But the greatest expl'it ov all was—"

"What, you unconscionable liar—what?" exclaimed I, determined to put a stop to any further drafts upon old "Blair's" credulity.

"Why, the one you was tellin' me t'other day 'bout old Neption's hitching his sea-horses to some big island or 'nother, and pulling it up by the roots, and towing it off with the people and all on it, and anchorin' it down in some other place that he liked better," was the unexpected rejoinder.

A reply was deemed unnecessary; and in a few minutes more the cheerful plash of the Bankhead spring was among the sounds we heard not.

XXII.

YANKEE HOMESPUN.

"WHEN I lived in Maine," said Uncle Ezra, "I helped to break up a new piece of ground: we got the wood off in the winter, and early in the spring we begun ploughing on't. It was so consarned rocky that we had to get forty yoke of oxen to one plough—we did faith—and I held that plough more'n a week; I thought I should die. It e'en a most killed me, I vow. Why, one day I was hold'n, and the plough hit a stump which measured just nine feet and a half through it—hard and sound white oak. The plough split it, and I was going straight through the stump when I happened to think it might snap together again, so I threw my feet out, and had no sooner done this, than it snapped together, taking a smart hold of the seat of my pantaloons. Of course I was tight, but I held on to the plough-handles, and though the teamsters did all they could, that team of eighty oxen could not tear my pantaloons, nor cause me to let go my grip. At last though, after letting the cattle breathe, they gave another strong pull all together, and the old stump came out about the quickest; it had monstrous long roots, too, let me tell you. My wife made the cloth for them pantaloons, and I havn't worn any other kind since."

The only reply made to this was, "I should have thought it would have come hard upon your suspenders."

"Powerful hard."

XXIII.

THE INDEFATIGABLE BEAR-HUNTER.

IN my round of practice, I occasionally meet with men whose peculiarities stamp them as belonging to a class composed only of themselves. So different are they in appearance, habits, taste, from the majority of mankind, that it is impossible to classify them, and you have therefore to set them down as queer birds "of a feather," that none resemble sufficiently to associate with.

I had a patient once who was one of these queer ones; gigantic in stature, uneducated, fearless of real danger, yet timorous as a child of superstitious perils, born literally in the woods, never having been in a city in his life, and his idea of one being that it was a place where people met together to make whiskey, and form plans for swindling country folks. To view him at one time you would think him only a whiskey-drinking, bear-fat-loving mortal; at other moments he would give vent to ideas, proving that beneath his rough exterior there ran a fiery current of high enthusiastic ambition.

It is a favourite theory of mine, and one that I am fond of consoling myself with, for my own insignificance, that there is no man born who is not capable of attaining distinction, and no occupation that does not contain a path leading to fame. To bide our time is all that is necessary. I had expressed this view in the hearing of Mik-hoo-tah, for so was the object of this sketch called, and it seemed to chime in with his feelings exactly. Born in the woods, and losing his parents early, he had forgotten his real name, and the bent of his genius inclining him to the slaying of bears, he had been given, even when a youth, the name of Mik-hoo-tah, signifying "the grave of bears," by his Indian associates and admirers.

To glance in and around his cabin, you would have thought that the place had been selected for ages past by the bear tribe to yield up their spirits in, so numerous were the relics. Little chance, I ween, had the cold air to whistle through that

hut, so thickly was it tapestried with the soft, downy hides, the darkness of the surface relieved occasionally by the skin of a tender fawn, or the short-haired irascible panther. From the joists depended bear-hams and tongues innumerable, and the ground without was literally white with bones. Ay, he was a bear-hunter, in its most comprehensive sense—the chief of that vigorous band, whose occupation is nearly gone—crushed beneath the advancing strides of romance-destroying civilization. When his horn sounded—so tradition ran—the bears began to draw lots to see who should die that day, for painful experience had told them the uselessness of all endeavours to escape. The “Big Bear of Arkansas” would not have given him an hour’s extra work, or raised a fresh wrinkle on his already care-corrugated brow. But, though almost daily imbruising his hands in the blood of Bruin, Mik-hoo-tah had not become an impious or cruel-hearted man. Such was his piety, that he never killed a bear without getting down on his knees—to skin it—and praying to be pardoned if it warn’t a buster; and such his softness of heart, that he often wept when he, by mistake, had killed a suckling bear—depriving her poor offspring of a mother’s care—and found her too poor to be eaten. So indefatigable had he become in his pursuit, that the bears bid fair to disappear from the face of the swamp, and be known to posterity only through the one mentioned in Scripture, that assisted Elisha to punish the impertinent children, when an accident occurred to the hunter, which raised their hopes of not being entirely exterminated.

One day Mik happened to come unfortunately in contact with a stray grizzly fellow, who, doubtless in the indulgence of an adventurous spirit, had wandered away from the Rocky Mountains, and formed a league for mutual protection with his black and more effeminate brethren of the swamp. Mik saluted him, as he approached, with an ounce ball in the forehead, to avenge half a dozen of his best dogs, who lay in fragments around; the bullet flattened upon his impenetrable skull, merely infuriating the monster, and before Mik could reload, it was upon him. Seizing him by the leg, it bore him to the ground, and ground the limb to atoms. But before it could attack a more vital part, the knife of the dauntless hunter had cloven its heart and it dropped dead upon the bleeding form of its slayer, in which condition they were shortly found by Mik’s comrades. Making a litter of branches, they placed Mik upon it, and proceeded with all haste to their camp, sending one of the company by a near cut for

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me, as I was the nearest physician. When I reached their temporary shelter, I found Mik doing better than I could have expected, with the exception of his wounded leg, and that, from its crushed and mutilated condition, I saw would have to be amputated immediately, of which I informed Mik. As I expected, he opposed it vehemently; but I convinced him of the impossibility of saving it, assuring him if it were not amputated he would certainly die, and appealed to his good sense to grant permission, which he did at last. The next difficulty was to procure amputating instruments, the rarity of surgical operations, and the generally slender purse of the "Swamp Doctor," not justifying him in purchasing expensive instruments. A couple of bowie-knives, one ingeniously hacked and filed into a saw—a tourniquet made of a belt and a piece of stick—a gun-screw converted for the time into a tenaculum—and some buckskin slips for ligatures, completed my case of instruments for amputation. The city physician may smile at this recital, but I assure him many a more difficult operation than the amputation of a leg, has been performed by his humble brother in the "swamp," with far more simple means than those I have mentioned. The preparations being completed Mik refused to have his arms bound, and commenced singing a bear-song; and throughout the whole operation, which was necessarily tedious, he never uttered a groan, or missed a single stave. The next day, I had him conveyed by easy stages to his pre-emption; and tending assiduously, in the course of a few weeks, he had recovered sufficiently for me to cease attentions. I made him a wooden leg, which answered a good purpose; and with a sigh of regret for the spoiling of such a good hunter, I struck him from my list of patients.

A few months passed over and I heard nothing more of him. Newer, but not brighter, stars were in the ascendant, filling with their deeds the clanging trump of bear-killing fame, and, but for the quantity of bear-blankets in the neighbouring cabins, and the painful absence of his usual present of bear-hams, Mik-hoo-tan bid fair to suffer that fate most terrible in aspiring ambitionists—forgetfulness during life. It was near sunset when I arrived at home from a long wearisome semi-ride-and-swim through the swamp. Receiving a negative to my inquiry whether there were any new calls, I was felicitating myself upon a quiet night beside my tidy bachelor hearth, undisturbed by crying children, babbling women, or amorous cats—the usual accompaniments of married life—when, like a poor henpecked Benedict crying for

peace when there is no peace, I was doomed to disappointment. Hearing the splash of a paddle in the bayou running before the door, I turned my head towards the bank, and soon beheld, first the tail of a coon, next his body, a human face, and, the top of a bank being gained, a full-proportioned form clad in the garments which, better than any printed label, wrote him down raftsman, trapper, bear-hunter. He was a messenger from the indefatigable bear-hunter, Mik-hoo-tah. Asking him what was the matter, as soon as he could get the knots untied, which two-thirds drunkenness had made in his tongue, he informed me, to my sincere regret, that Mik went out that morning on a bear-hunt, and in a fight with one had got his leg broke all to flinders, if possible worse than the other, and that he wanted me to come quickly. Getting into the canoe, which awaited me, I wrapped myself in my blanket, and yielding to my fatigue, was soon fast asleep. I did not awaken until the canoe striking against the bank, as it landed at Mik's pre-emption, nearly threw me in the bayou, and entirely succeeded with regard to my half-drunken paddler, who—like the sailor that circumnavigated the world, and then was drowned in a puddle-hole in his own garden—had escaped all the perils of the tortuous bayou to be pitched overboard when there was nothing to do but to step out and tie the dug-out. Assisting him out of the water, we proceeded to the house, when, to my indignation, I learnt that the drunken messenger had given me the long trip for nothing, Mik only wanting me to make him a new wooden leg, the old one having been completely demolished that morning.

I would have returned that night, but the distance was too great for one fatigued as I was, so I had to content myself with such accommodations as Mik's cabin afforded, which, to one blessed like myself with the happy faculty of ready adaptation to circumstances, was not a very difficult task.

I was surprised to perceive the change in Mik's appearance. From nearly a giant he had wasted to a mere huge bony frame-work; the skin of his face clung tightly to the bones, and showed nothing of those laughter-moving features that were wont to adorn his visage; only his eye remained unchanged, and it had lost none of its brilliancy—the flint had lost none of its fire.

"What on earth is the matter with you, Mik? I have never seen any one fall off so fast; you have wasted to a skeleton—surely you must have the consumption."

"Do you think so, Doc? I'll soon show you whether the

old bellows has lost any of its force!" and hopping to the door, which he threw wide open, he gave a death-hug rally to his dogs, in such a loud and piercing tone, that I imagined a steam-whistle was being discharged in my ear, and for several moments could hear nothing distinctly.

"That will do! stop!" I yelled, as I saw Mik drawing in his breath preparatory to another effort of his vocal strength; "I am satisfied you have not got consumption; but what has wasted you so, Mik? Surely you ain't in love?"

"Love! pooh! you don't suppose, Doc, even if I was 'tar-mined to make a cussed fool of myself, that there is any gal in the swamp that could stand that hug, do you?" and catching up a huge bull-dog, who lay basking himself by the fire, he gave him such a squeeze that the animal yelled with pain, and for a few moments appeared dead. "No, Doc, it's grief, pure sorrur, sorrur, Doc! when I looks at what I is now and what I used to be! Jes think, Doc, of the fust hunter in the swamp having his sport spilt, like bar-meat in summer without salt! Jes think of a man standin' up one day and blessing old Master for having put bar in creation, and the next cussing high heaven and low h—ll 'cause he couldn't 'sist in puttin' them out! Warn't it enough to bring tears in the eyes of an Injun tater, much less take the fat off a bar-hunter? Doc, I fell off like 'simmons arter frost, and folks as doubted me, needn't had asked whether I war 'ceitful or not, for they could have seed plum threw me! The bar and painter got so saucy that they'd cum to the t'other side of the bayou and see which could talk the impudentest!"

"Don't you want some bar-meat or painter blanket?" they'd ask; 'bars is monstrous fat, and painter's hide is mighty warm!"

"Oh! Doc, I was a miserable man! The sky warn't blue for me, the sun war always cloudy, and the shade-trees gin no shade for me. Even the dogs forgot me, and the little children quit coming and asking,

"Please, Mr Bar-Grave, cotch me a young bar or a painter kitten."

"Doc, the tears would cum in my eyes, and the hot blood would come biling up from my heart, when I'd hobble out of a sundown and hear the boys tell, as they went by, of the sport they'd had that day, and how the bar fit 'fore he was killed, and how fat he war arter he was slayed. Long arter they was gone, and the whip-poor-will had eat up their voices, I would sit out there on the old stump, and think of

the things that used to hold the biggest place in my mind when I was a boy, and p'raps sense I've been a man.

"I'd heard tell of distinction and fame, and people's names never dying, and how Washington and Franklin, and Clay and Jackson, and a heap of political dyeshumary-folks, would live when their big hearts had crumbled down to a rifle-charge of dust; and I begun, too, to think, Doc, what a pleasant thing it would be to know folks a million years off would talk of me like them, and it made me 'tarmin' to 'stin-guish myself, and have my name put in a book with a yaller kiver. I warn't a genius, Doc, I nude that, nor I warn't dyeshumary: so I determined to strike out in a new track for glory, and 'titled myself to be called the 'bear-hunter of Ameriky.' Doc, my heart jump't up, and I belted my hunting-shirt tighter for fear it would lepe out when I fust spoke them words out loud.

"The bar-hunter of Ameriky!' Doc, you know whether I war ernin' the name when I war ruined. There is not a child, white, black, Injun, or nigger, from the Arkansas line to Trinity, but what has heard of me, and I were happy when"—here a tremor of his voice and a tear glistening in the glare of the fire told the old fellow's emotion—"when—but les take a drink—Doc, I found I was dying—I war gettin' weaker and weaker—I nude your truck warn't what I needed, or I'd sent for you. A bar-hunt war the medsin that my systum required, a fust-class bar-hunt, the music of the dogs, the fellers a screaming, the cane poppin', the rifles crackin', the bar growlin', the fight hand to hand, slap goes his paw, and a dog's-hide hangs on one cane and his body on another, the knife glistenin' and then goin' plump up to the handle in his heart! Oh! Doc, this was what I needed, and I swore, since death were huggin' me, anyhow, I mite as well feel his last grip in a bar-hunt.

"I seed the boys goin' long one day, and haled them to wait awhile, as I bel eved I would go along too. I war frado if I kept out of a hunt much longer I wood get outen practis. They laughed at me, thinkin' I war jokin'; for wat cood a sick, old, one-legged man do in a bar-hunt? how cood he get threw the swamp, and vines, and canes, and back-water? and s'pose he mist the bar, how war he to get outen the way?

"But I war 'tarmined on goin'; my dauder was up, and I swore I wood go, tellin' them if I coodent travel 'bout much, I could take a stand. Secin' it war no use tryin' to 'swado me, they saddled my poney and off we started. I felt better right off. I knew I cuddent do much in the chase, so I told

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the fellers I would go to the cross-path stand, and wate for the bar, as he would be sarten to cum by thar. You have never seed the cross-path stand, Doc. It's the singularest place in the swamp. It's rite in the middle of a canebrake, thicker than har on a bar-bide, down in a deep sink, that looks like the devil had cummenst diggin' a skylite for his pre-emption. I knew it war a dangerous place for a well man to go in, much less a one-leg cripple; but I war 'tarmined that time to give a deal on the dead-wood, and play my hand out. The boys gin me time to get to the stand, and then cummenst the drive. The bar seemed 'tarmined on disap-pinting me, for the fust thing I heard of the dogs and bar, they was outen hearing. Everything got quiet, and I got so wrathy at not being able to foller up the chase, that I cust till the trees cummenst shedding their leaves and small branches, when I herd them lumbrin' back, and I nudo they war makin' to me. I primed old 'bar death' fresh, and rub-bed the frizin, for it war no time for rille to get snappin'. Thinks I, if I happen to miss, I'll try what virtue there is in a knife—when, Doc, my knife war gone. Oh! bar, for God's sake have a soft head, and die easy, for I *can't* run!

"Doc, you've hearn a bar bustin' throw a cane-brake, and know how near to a harrycane it is. I almost cummenst dodgin' the trees, thinkin' it war the best in the shop one a comin', for it beat the loudest thunder ever I heard; that ole bar did, comin' to get his death from an ole one-legged cripple, what had slayed more of his brethren than his nigger foot had ever made trax in the mud. Doc, he heerd a *monstrous long way ahead of the dogs*. I warn't skeered, but I must own as I had but one shot an' no knife, I wud have prefurd they had been closer. But here he cum! he bar—big as a bull—boys off h—llwards—dogs no whar—no knife—but one shot—and *only one leg that cood run!*

"The bar 'peered s'prised to see me standin' ready for him in the openin'; for it war currently reported 'mong his brethren that I war either dead, or no use for bar. I thought fust he war skeered; and, Doc, I b'leve he war, till he cotch a sight of my wooden leg, and that toeh his pride, for he knew he would be hist outen every she bear's company, of he run from a poor, sickly, one-legged cripple, so on he cum, a small river of slobber pourin' from his mouth, and the blue smoke curlin' outen his ears. I tuck good aim at his left, and let drive. The ball struck him on the eyebrow, and glanced off, only, stunnin' him for a moment, jes givin' me time to club my rifle, an' on he kum, as fierce as old grizzly.

As he got in reach, I gin him a lick 'cross the temples, brakin' the stock in fifty pieces, an' knockin' him senseless. I struv to foller up the lick, when, Doe, I war fast—my timber too had run inter the ground, and I cudden git out, though I jerked hard enuf almost to bring my thigh out of joint. I stuped to unscrew the infurnal thing, when the bar cum too, and cum at me agen. Vim! I tuck him over the head, and, cochunk, he keeled over. Oh! but I cavorted and pitched. Thar war my wust enemy, watin' for me to giv him a finisher, an' I cudden git at him. I'd cummense unscrewin' leg—here cum bar—vim—cochunk—he'd fall out of reach—and, Doe, I cudden git to him. I kept workin' my body round, so as to unscrew the leg, and keep the bar off till I cood 'complish it, when jes as I tuk the last turn, and got loose from the pesky thing, here cum bar, more venomous than ever, and I nude that war death to one out, and comin' shortly. I let him get close, an' then cum down with a perfect tornado on his head, as I thought; but the old villain had learnt the dodge—the barrel jes struck him on the side of the head, and glanst off, slinging itself out of my hands 'bout twenty feet 'mongst the thick cane, and thar I war in a fix sure. Bar but little hurt—no gun—no knife—no dogs—no frens—no chance to climb—*an' only one leg that cood run.* Doe, I jes cummenst makin' pologies to ole Master, when an idee struck me. Doe, did you ever see a piney woods nigger pullin' at a sassafras root? or a suckin' pig in a tater patch after the big yams? You has! Well, you can 'magin how I jurkt at that wudden leg, for it war the last of pea-time with me, sure, if I didn't rise 'fore bar did. At last they both cum up, 'bout the same time, and I braced myself for a death struggle.

"We fit all round that holler! Fust I'd foller bar and then bar would chase me! I'd make a lick, he'd fend off, and showin' a set of teeth that no doctor, 'cept natur, had ever wurkt at, cum tearin' at me! We both 'gan to git tired, I heard the boys and dogs cumin', so did bar, and we vere both anxshus to bring the thing to a close 'fore they cum up, though I wuddent thought they were intrudin' ef they had come up some time afore.

"I'd worn the old leg pretty well off to the second jint, when, jest 'fore I made a lick, the noise of the boys and dogs cummin' sorter confused bar, and he made a stumble, an' bein' off his guard I got a fair lick! The way that bar's flesh giv in to the soft impresshuns of that leg war an honour to the mederkal perfeshun for having invented sich a weepun! I hollered—but you have heered me holler an' I won't de-

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scribe it—I had whipped a bar in a fair hand to hand fight—me, an old, sickly, one-legged bar-hunter! The boys cum up, and when they seed the ground we had fit over, they swore they would hav thought, 'stead of a bar-fight, that I had been cuttin' cane and deadenin' timber for a corn-patch, the sile war so worked up, they then handed me a knife to finish the work.

“Doc, les licker, it's a dry talk—when will you make me another leg? for bar-meat is not over plenty in the cabin, and I feel like tryin' another!”

XXIV.

COLONEL CROCKETT'S RIDE ON THE BACK OF A BUFFALO.

ABOUT ten years ago I fell in with a camp of Konzas, a good piece off the north fork of the Canadian. The Injuns a kyind a sorter give me a sorter tanyard grin, and the old chief specially puckered up his pictur like a green persimmon; but there were three raal roarers from Salt River with me, so I didn't care a picayoon if it cum to skulpin. Besides I was tetotaciously tired, and I slepp so sound that I wish my rifle may hang fire for ever if I don't think it would have took something rougher than an earthquake to wake me. So I lay till after daylite, and then one of me comrades shook me, to tell me the Injun boys had found a huraah's neest. I took up old Kill-devil, and out I went, and about a hundred yards from the camp there war an old buffalo bull with a hundred little screeching imps about him, with their bows and arrows. They'd stuck so many arrows in him that he looked as thorny as a honey locus or a porkypine; but they hadn't got deep enough to touch the rite spot. First the old Turk would go arter one full chizzle; but then another would stick an arro into his posterity, saving our presence, and round he would turn and arter the little toment like an ate-horse baggage waggin. I raily pitied the old cretur, and sez I, “It are raily a shame to let this uncircumcised Fillistin defy the army of Israel in this ridiculous way. I'll let him know there's a warrant out arter him,” and I wur gwine to blaze away; but an old Injun kort me elbow, and axed me if it were the way in Kentuck to hinder the children from having a little dust of diversion that did no harm to no one.

"Truth are the truth," sez I, "if an Injun do speak it, and my sarvis to you for the complement."

After a wile the old devil's baby of a bull laid down, for he'd lost a purty smart chance of blood, and what doz one of the b'ys do, but gits astraddle on his back. The way he riz up warn't slow, and off he sot as if the prairie were afire behind him. I've a notion the b'y never rode so sharp a rail before as that bull's hump.

The old Injun the b'y belonged to wur as white as a lump of chalk for fear his b'y would be killed, and he bangs away at the bull and hits him in the belly, for he wur afraid of breaking the b'y's leg if he squinted at the heart. That maid the cretur as ugly as a copperhead in July, and he takes arter the old hero like a whole team of thunderbolts.

"Run! run, father!" screeches the young varmint to the old one, "or I'll be down on ye like a falling star," and I begun to see the old one was in danger pretty considerably much.

So I sung out to the b'y to raze his leg, cause it kivered the critter's heart, and I wish I may be shot if he didn't do it as cool as if I held the breech of the rifle at him and not the muzzle, but that's the nature of an Injun. Bang goes old Kill-devil and down comes old bull-beef; but the b'y couldn't walk for a week, and he kyind of thort he'd never ride bair-backed on a buffalo agin, without he seed some special 'casion.

XXV.

COLONEL CROCKETT'S ADVENTURE WITH A GRIZZLY BEAR.

You may say what you please, and be hanged to you, Mr Stranger, about your hannycondy, the great terrificacious sarpint of Seelon, in South Ameriky, and your rale Bengal tiger from Afriky. Both on 'em heated to a white heat, and welded into one, would be no part of a priming to a grizzly bear of the Rocky Mountains. He'd chaw up your roo-nosseros, and your lion, and your tiger, as small as cut tobacco, for breakfast, and pick his teeth with the bones. The cretur's rale grit, and don't mind fire no more than sugar plums, and none of your wild beastesses can say that for themselves. I've killed one or two on 'em myself, which ar not a thing many suckers can boast on, tho' they are pretty

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good at scalping Injuns. I was delightfully skeered by the
fust I ever saw—no, that ar a lie, tho' I say it myself:
Davy Crockett was never skeered by anything but a female
woman; but it ar a fact that I war tetotaciously consarned
for my life.

You see it war when I war young I went to massacre the
buffaloes on the head of Little Great Small Deep Shallow Big
Muddy River, with my nigger b'y Doughboy, what I give
three hundred dollars for. I'd been all day, till now, vaga-
bondizing about the prairie, without seeing an atom of a
buffalo, when I seed one grazing in the rushes, on the edge
of a pond, and a crusty old batchelder he was. He war a
thousand year old at least, for his hide were all kivered with
skars, and he had as much beard as would do all the dandies
I've seen in Broadway for whiskers and mustashes a hull
year. His eyes looked like two holes burnt in a blanket, or
two bullets fired into a stump; and I see he was a cross can-
tankerous feller, what coodent have no cumfort of his life
bekays he war too quarrelsome. If there's ennything Davy
Crockett's remarkable for, it's for his tender feelings, speshally
toward dum creturs; and I thort it would be a marcy to take
away his life, seeing it war onny a torment to him, and he
hadent no right to live, nohow. So I creeps toward him
like a garter snake through the grass, tralein Kill-devil arter
me. I war a going to tickle him a little about the short ribs,
jest to make him feel amiable, when out jumps a great bear,
as big as Kongress Hall, out of the rushes, and lights upon
the old Jew like a grey-winged plover. He only hit him one
blow, but that war a side winder. I wish I may be kicked
to death by grasshoppers, if he didn't tare out five of his
ribs, and laid his heart and liver all bare. I kinder sorter
pitted the old feller when I see him brought to such an un-
timely eend, and I didn't somehow think the bear done the
thing that war right, for I always does my own scalping, and
no thanks to interlopers. So, sez I,

"I'm a civii man, Mr Bear, saving your presence, and I
wou't come for to go to give you no insolatious language;
but I'll thank you, when we meet again, not to disremember
the old saying, but let every man skin his own shunks."

And with that I insinnivated a ball slap through his
hart.

By the ghost of the great mammoth of Big Bone Licks,
your'd have thort, by the way he nashed his teeth, I'd a
spoken sumthing onpleasant to him. His grinders made a
noise jest as if all creation war sharpening cross-cut saws by

steam-power, and he war down upon me like the whole Missouri on a sand-bar.

There's no more back out in Davy Crockett than thar ar go-ahead with the Bunker Hill Monument, and so I give him a sogdologer over his coco-nut with the barrel of old Kill-devil that sot him a konsidering, and he thort better on it, and sot off after Doughboy as if the devil had kicked him on eend. It's true Doughboy slipped a ball into his ampersand jest as I struck him; but that war not what turned him; I grinned him out a countenance, so he thort it war safer to make his breakfast on Doughboy than me, which war a thing oncreditable to his taste, seeing I war a white man and he only a nigger.

Well, I hadn't time to load my iron before he gathered upon Doughboy like a Virginny blood mear, and the nigger give himself up for a gone sucker, and fainted away. The bear got up to him jest as I war putting down my ball, and I expected to see him swaller the b'y without greasing; but he no sooner smelt of him than he turned up his nose in disgust, as Isaac Hill did when Mr Upham hosswipt him, and run away howling as if his delicacy was hugaceously shocked.

By this time I felt most inticingly wolffy and savagerous, and I jest giv him a hint that no man could neglect that it war best to turn in his tracks, and I waited for him jest on the edge of Little Great Small Deep Shallow Big Muddy. He pitched inter me like the piston of a steam-injun, and we both rolled into the drink together. Onluckily for him I didn't lose holt of Kill-devil, and when he raised his head and tried to get over his astonishment, I clapt the barrel right across his neck to shove his visnomy under water. I'll be shot with a packsaddle without benefit of clargy if the ridiculous fool didn't help me himself, for he clapped both hands on the cends of the barrel and pulled away as if it war a pleasure to him. I had nothing to do but hold on to the stock and float alongside of him till he war drowned.

Don't you come for to say I'm telling the least of a lie, for every fool knows a grizzly bear will live an hour with a ball through his heart, if so be he's onny mad enuff.

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XXVI.

COLONEL CROCKETT, THE BEAR AND THE SWALLOWS.

PEOPLE tell a great many silly stories about swallows. Some say that if you kill one your cows will give bloody milk, and others tell as how they fly away in the fall and come back again in the spring, when the leaves of the white oaks are jest as big as a mowse's ear. Agin, thar ar some that tell how they keep Christmas and New Year's among the little fishes, at the bottom of some pond; but you may tell all them that sez so they are dratted fools, and don't know nothing about the matter. Swallows sleep all winter in the holler of some old rotten sycamore, and I'll tell you how I come to find it out.

I war out airly in the spring with my rifle on the banks of the Tennessee, making up my opinion about matters and things in general, when all of a sudden I heard a clap of thunder, and that sot me a thinking. "Now," sez I, "if I war to go home and tell of that, the boys would think me a liar, if they didn't dare to call me so; for who ever heard of such a thing as thunder under a clear sky of a bright spring day!" And with that I looked up, and agin I heerd the thunder, but it war not thunder anyhow I could fix it; for a hull swarm of swallows came bodily out of an old hollow sycamore, and it war the noise they made with the flapping of their wings.

Now I thought to myself that them ar little varmints war doing some mischief in the tree, and that it war my duty to see into it; for you see just then I felt hugely grandiferous; for the nabors had made me a Justus Pease. So I cut down a saplin' with my knife, and set it agin the tree, and clim' up like a squirrel; for you know a sycamore has a smooth bark. As I war bending over the edge of the holler to look down, the sapplin' broke under me, and trying to catch at something I lost my balance, and fell down into the tree head-foremost. When I got to the bottom I found myself a little the nastiest critter ever you saw, on account of the swallows' dung, and how to get out I didn't know; for the hole war deep, and when I looked up I could see the stars out of the top. Presently I put my hand into something as soft as a feather-bed, and I heerd an awful growling. But it war only an old bar I woke out of his winter nap, and I out butcher to see which war the best man. But the kitter war

clean amazed, and seemed to like my room better than my company, and made a bolt to get out of the scrape most cowardly.

"Hollo, stranger!" sez I; "we don't part company without having a fair shake for a fite;" and so, saving your presence, I clenched hold both his posterities. But finding the hair war like to give way, I got hold of his stump of a tail with my teeth, and then I had him fast enough. But still he kept on clim'ing up the holler, and I begun to sorter like the idee; for you know he couldn't get up without pulling me up arter him. So when he begun to get tired, I quickened his pace with an awful fundamental poke with my butcher, jest by way of a gentle hint. Before long we got to the top of the tree, and then I got to the ground quicker than he did, seeing he come down tale foremost, I got my shooting iron to be ready for him. But he kinder seemed to got enough of my company, and went off squeeling as if something ailed his hinder parts, which I thought a kind of curious; for I've no opinion of a fellow that will take a kick, much less such usage as I give him. However, I let him go, for it would be onmanly to be onthankful for the sarvis he done me, and for all I know he's alive yet. And it war not the only thing I had to thank him for, I had a touch of the toothache before, and the bite I got at his tail cured me entirely. I've never had it since, and I can recommend it to all people that has the toothache to chew two inches of a bear's tail. It's a sartin cure. Thar ar a wicked sight of vartue in bear's grease, as I know by my own experience.

XXVII.

A PRETTY PREDICAMENT.

WHEN I was a big boy, that had jist begun to go a galling, I got astray in the woods one arternoon; and being wandering about a good deel, and got pretty considerable soaked by a grist of rain, I sot down on to a stump, and begun to wring out my leggin's, and shake the drops off of my raccoon cap.

Whilst I was on the stump, I got kind of sleepy, and so laid my head back in the crotch of a young tree that growed behind me, and shot up my eyes. I had laid out of doors for many a night before, with a sky blanket over me—so I got to

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sleep pretty soon, and fell to snoring most beautiful. So somehow, or somehow else, I did not wake till near sundown; and I don't know when I should have waked. Had it not been for somebody tugging at my hair. As soon as I felt this, though I wan't more than half awake, I begun to feel to see if my thum' nail was on, as that was all the ammunition I had about me. I lay still, to see what the feller would be at. The first idee I had was that a cussed Ingun was fixing to take off my scalp; so I thought I'd wait till I begun to feel the pint of his knife scraping against the skin, and then I should have full proof agin him, and could jerk out his copper-coloured liver with the law all on my side. At last I felt such a hard twitch, that I roared right out, but when I found my head was squeezed so tight in the crotch that I could not get it out, I felt like a gone sucker. I felt raal ridiculous, I can assure you; so I began to talk to the varmint, and telled him to help me get my head out, like a man, and I would give him five dollars before I killed him.

At last my hair begun to come out by the roots, and then I was mad to be took advantage of in that way. I swore at the varmint, till the tree shed all its leaves, and the sky turned yaller. So, in a few minutes, I heerd a voice, and then a gall cum running up, and axed what was the matter. She soon saw what was to pay, and telled me that the eagles were tearing out my hair to build nests with. I telled her I had endured more than a dead possum could stand already, and that if she would drive off the eagles, I would make her a present of an iron comb.

"That I will," says she; "for I am a she steam-boat, and have doubled up a crocodile in my day."

So she pulled up a small sapling by the roots, and went to work as if she hadn't another minnit to live. She knocked down two of the varmints, and screamed the rest out of sight. Then I telled her the predicament I was in; and she said she would loosen the hold that the crotch had on my head. So she took and reached out her arm into a rattle-snake's hole, and pulled out three or four of them. She tied 'em awl together, and made a strong rope out of 'em. She tied one eend of the snakes to the top of one branch, and pulled as if she was trying to haul the multiplication table apart. The tightness about my head begun to be different altogether, and I hauled out my cocoa-nut, though I left a piece of one of my ears behind.

As soon as I was clear, I could not tell which way to look for the sun, and I was afeared I should fall into the sky, for

I did not know which way was up, and which way was down. Then I looked at the gall that had got me loose—she was a strapper: she was as tall as a sapling and had an arm like a keel boat's tiller. So I looked at her like all wrath, and as she cum down from the tree, I says to her,

"I wish I may be utterly onswoggled if I don't know how to hate an Ingun or love a gal as well as any he this side of roaring river. I fell in love with three gals at once at a log rolling, and as for tea squalls my heart never shut pan for a minnit at a time; so if you will marry me I will forgive the tree and the eagles for your sake."

Then she turned as white as an egg-shell and I seed that her heart was busting, and I run up to her, like a squirrel to his hole, and gave her a buss that sounded louder than a musket. So her spunk was all gone, and she took my arm as tame as a pigeon, and we cut out for her father's house. She complained that I hung too heavy on her arm, for I was enermost used up after laying so long between the branches. So she took up a stone that would weigh about fifty pound, and put it in her pocket on the other side to balance agin my weight, and so she moved along as upright as a steamboat. She told me that her Sunday bonnet was a hornet's nest garnished with wolves' tails and eagles' feathers, and that she wore a bran new gown, made of a whole bear's-hide, the tail serving for a train. She said she could drink of the branch without a cup, could shoot a wild goose flying, and wade the Mississippi without wetting herself. She said she could not play on the piane, nor sing like a nightingale, but she could outscreeam a catamount and jump over her own shadow; she had good strong horse sense and new a woodchuck from a skunk. So I was pleased with her, and offered her all my plunier if she would let me split the difference and call her Mrs Crockett.

She kinder said she must insult her father before she went so fur as to marry. So she took me into another room to introduce me to another beau that she had. He was setting on the edge of a grind-stone at the back part of the room with his heels on the mantel-piece! He had the skull-bone of a catamount for a snuff-box, and he was dressed like he had been used to seeing hard times. I got a side squint into one of his pockets, and saw it was full of eyes that had been gouged from people of my acquaintance. I knew my jig was up, for such a feller could outcourt me and I thort the gal brot me in on proppus to have a fight. So I turned off, and threatened to call agin; and I cut through the bushes like a pint of whiskey among forty men.

XXVIII.

THE EDITOR'S CREED.

HE takes up the crook, not that the sheep may be fed,
but that he may never want a warm woollen suit and a joint
of mutton.

For which reason I would derive the name *editor* not so
much from *edo*, to publish, as from *edo*, to eat, that being the
peculiar profession to which he esteems himself called. He
blows up the flames of political discord for no other occasion
than that he may thereby handily boil his own pot. I believe
there are two thousand of these mutton-loving shepherds in
the United States, and of these, how many have even the
dimmost perception of their immense power, and the duties
consequent thereon? Here and there, haply, one. Nine
hundred and ninety-nine labour to impress upon the people
the great principles of *Tweedledum*, and other nine hundred
and ninety-nine preach with equal earnestness the doctrines
according to *Tweedledee*.

I du believe in Freedom's cause,
Ez fur away ez Paris is;
I love to see her stick her claws
In them infarnal Pharisees;
It's wal enough agin a king
To dror resolves an' triggers,—
But libbaty's a kind o' thing
That don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people want
A tax on teas an' coffees,
Thet nothin' aint extravygunt,—
Purvidin' I'm in office;
Fer I hev loved my country sence
My eye-teeth filled their sockets,
An' Uncle Sam I reverence,
Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe in *any* plan
O' levyin' the taxes,
Ez long ez, like a lumberman,
I git jest wut I axes:

TRAITS OF AMERICAN HUMOUR.

I go free-trade thru thick an' thin,
 Because it kind o' rouses
 The folks to vote,—an' keeps us in
 Our quiet custom-houses.

I du believe it's wise an' good
 To sen' out furrin missions,
 Thet is, on sartin understood
 An' orthydox conditions;—
 I mean nine thousan' dolls. per ann.,
 Nine thousan' more fer outfit,
 An' me to recommend a man
 The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways
 O' prayin' an' convartin';
 The bread comes back in many days,
 An' buttered, tu, fer sartin;—
 I mean in preyin' till one busts
 On wut the party chooses,
 An' in convartin' public trusts
 To very privit uses.

I du believe hard coin the stuff
 Fer 'lectioneers to spout on;
 The people's ollers soft enoug'
 To make hard money out on;
 Dear Uncle Sam pervides fer his,
 An' gives a good-sized junk to all,—
 I don't care *how* hard money is,
 Ez long ez mine's paid punctooal.

I du believe with all my soul
 In the gret Press's freedom,
 To pint the people to the goal
 An' in the traces lead 'em;
 Palsied the arm thet forges yokes
 At my fat contracts squintin',
 An' withered be the nose thet pokes
 Inter the gov'ment printin'!

I du believe thet I should give
 Wut's his'n unto Cæsar,
 Fer it's by him I move an' live,
 Frum him my bread an' cheese air;

I du believe thet all o' me
Doth bear his sounperscription,—
Will, conscience, honour, honesty,
An' things o' thet description.

I du believe in prayer an' praise
To him thet hez the grantin'
O' jobs,—in everythin' thet pays,
But most of all in CANTIN';
This doth my cup with marcies fill,
This lays all thought o' sin to rest,—
I *don't* believe in princerple,
But, O, I *du* in interest.

I du believe in bein' this
Or thet, ez it may happen
One way or t'other hendiest is
To ketch the people nappin';
It ain't by princerples nor men
My preudunt course is steadied,—
I scent which pays the best, an' then
Go into it baldheaded.

I du believe thet holdin' slaves
Comes nat'ral tu a Presidunt,
Let 'lone the rowdedow it saves
To hev a wal-broke preceadunt;
Fer any office, small or gret,
I couldn't ax with no face,
Without I'd ben, thru dry an' wet,
Th' unrizzest kind o' doughface.

I du believe wutever trash
'll keep the people in blindness,—
That we the Mexicuns can thrash
Right inter brotherly kindness,
Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n' ball
Air good-will's strongest magnets,
Thet peace, to make it stick at all,
Must be druv in with bagnets.

In short, I firmly du believe
In Humbug generally,
Fer it's a thing thet I perceive
To hev a solid vally;

This heth my faithful leader ben,
 To browsing sweet heth led me,
 An' this 'll keep the people green
 To feed ez they hev fed me.

XXIX.

JOSH BEANPOLE'S COURTSHIP.

"MOTHER!" exclaimed Josh Beanpole, "Mother, I say, I feel all over in a twitteration like. Huh! huh! Who'd have thought it?"

"What ails ye, Josh?" asked the old woman, stopping her spinning-wheel at this exclamation. "What bug has bit you now?"

"Can't tell," said Josh, in a drooping, dolorous tone, and hanging his head as if he had been caught stealing a sheep.

"Can't tell?" said Mrs Beanpole, turning quite round, and giving Josh a wondering stare. "Can't tell? what does the critter mean?"

"Who'd ha' thought it?" repeated Josh, fumbling in his pockets, twisting round his head and rolling up his eyes in a fashion most immensely sheepish.—"Hannah Downer's courted!"

Here Josh shuffled himself awkwardly into the settle in the chimney corner, and sunk upon one side, fixing his eyes with a most ludicrous-dismal squint upon the lower extremity of a pot-hook that hung at the end of the crane.

"Court'd!" exclaimed Mrs Beanpole, not exactly comprehending the state of her son's intellectuals. "Well—what's all that when it's fried?"

"Arter so many pails of water as I've pumped for her," said Josh in a dismal whine,—"for to go for to let herself to be court'd by another feller!"

"Here's a to-do!" ejaculated the old woman.

"It's tarnation all over!" said Josh, beginning a bolder tone as he found his mother coming to an understanding of the matter. "It makes me crawl all over to think on't. Didn't I wait on her threc times to singing school? Hadn't I e'en a most made up my mind to break the ice, and tell her I shouldn't wonder if I had a sneakin' notion arter somebody's Hannah? I should ha' been reg'lar courting in less

than a month—and Peet Spinbutton has cut me out—as slick as a whistle!”

“Peet Spinbutton!” said the old woman, “well, I want to know!”

“Darn his eyes!” exclaimed Josh.

“Peet Spinbutton!” repeated Mrs Beanpole; “what, the ensign of the Dogtown Blues? that great lummokin’ feller!”

“Darn him to darnation!” exclaimed Josh, catching hold of the toast-iron as if he meant to lay about him, “to cut in afore me in that ere sort o’ way!”

Mrs Beanpole caught Josh by the arm, exclaiming,

“Josh! Joshy! Joshy! what are you about? Peet Spinbutton? I don’t believe it.”

“What!” said Josh, “didn’t I hear with my own ears, last night that ever was, Zeb Shute tell me all about it?”

“Zeb Shute! well, what did Zeb Shute say?”

“Why, says he to me,

“‘Josh,’ says he, ‘what do you think?’ says he.

“‘I don’t know, no n’t I,’ says I.

“‘Tell you what,’ says he, ‘that ’ere Hannah Downer—’

“‘What of Hannah Downer?’ says I, for I begun to crawl all over.

“‘Tell ye what,’ says he; ‘she’s a whole team.’

“‘Ah,’ says I, ‘she’s a whole team, and a horse to let.’

“‘Tell ye what,’ says he, ‘guess somebody has a sneakin’ notion that way.’

“‘Shouldn’t wonder,’ says I, feelin’ all over in a frustration, thinkin’ he meant me.

“‘Tell ye what,’ says he, ‘guess Peet Spinbutton and she’s pretty thick together.’

“‘How you talk!’ says I.

“‘Fact,’ says he.

“‘Well, I never!’ says I.

“‘Tell ye what,’ says he. No, that’s all he said.”

“Pooh!” said the old woman, “it’s all wind, Joshy; it’s nothing but Zeb Shute’s nonsense.”

“Do you think so?” exclaimed Josh, with a stare of uncommon animation, and his mouth wide open.

“No doubt on’t, Joshy, my boy,” replied she, “for Peggy Downer was here yesterday forenoon, to borrow a cup of starch, and she never mentioned the leastest word about it under the light of the livin’ sun.”

“If I was only sure of that!” said Josh, laying down the toast-iron and sticking his knuckles into his right eye.

“Joshy, my boy,” said the old woman, “I don’t believe

Hannah Downer ever gin Peet Spinbutton the leastest encouragement in the universal world."

"Think so?" asked Josh, setting his elbows on his knees, his chin in his fists, and fixing his eyes vacantly downward in an angle of forty-five degrees, as if in intense admiration of the back-log.

"I'll tell you what, Joshy," said Mrs Beanpole, in a motherly tone, "do you just put on your go-to-meetin' suit, and go to see Hannah this blessed night."

"Eh!" exclaimed Josh, starting from his elbows at the astounding boldness of the suggestion, and gazing straight up the chimney. "Do you think she'd let me?"

"Nothin' like tryin', Joshy; must be a first time. Besides, the old folks are going to lecture, Hannah'll be all alone—hey! Joshy, my boy! Nothin' like tryin'."

"Eh! eh!" said Josh, screwing himself all up in a heap and staring most desperately at the lower button of his own waistcoat—for the thoughts of actually going a courting came over him in a most alarming fashion; "would ye though, mother? Hannah's a nice gal, but somehow or other I feel plaguy queer about it."

"Oh, that's quite naiteral, Joshy; when you once get a goin' it be nothin' at all."

"Higgle, giggle, giggle," said Josh, making a silly, sputtering kind of laugh, "that's the very thing I'm afraid of, that 'ere gettin' a goin'. Hannah Downer is apt to be tarnation smart sometimes; and I've hearn tell that courtin' is the hardest thing in the world to begin, though it goes on so slick arterwards."

"Nonsense, Josh, you silly dough-head; it's only saying two words, and it ail goes as straight as a turnpike."

"By the hokey!" said Josh, rolling up his eyes and giving a punch with his fist in the air, "I've an all-fired mind to try it though!"

Josh and his mother held a much longer colloquy upon the matter, the result of which was such an augmentation of his courage for the undertaking, that the courtship was absolutely decided upon; and just after dark, Josh gave his face a sound scrubbing with soapsuds, drew forth his Sunday pantaloons, which were of the brightest cow-colour, and after a good deal of labour, succeeded in getting into them, his legs being somewhat of the longest, and the pantaloons as tight as a glove, so that on seeing him fairly incased, it was somewhat of a puzzle to guess how he could ever get out of them.

A flaming red waistcoat, and a grey coat with broad pewter buttons, set off his figure to the greatest advantage, to say nothing of a pair of bran new cow-hide shoes. Then rubbing his long hair with a tallow candle, and sprinkling a handful of Indian meal by way of powder, he twisted it behind with a leather string into a formidable queue, which he drew so tight that it was with the greatest difficulty he could shut his eyes; but this gave him but little concern, as he was determined to be wide awake through the whole affair. Being all equipt, he mounted Old Blueberry, and set off at an easy trot, which very soon fell into a walk, for the nearer Josh approached the dwelling of his Dulcinea, the more the thought of his great undertaking overpowered him.

Josh rode four times round the house before he found courage to alight; at length he made a desperate effort and pulled up under the lee side of the barn, where he dismounted, tied his horse, and approached the house with fear and trembling. At two rods distance he stopped short. There was a dead silence, and he stood in awful irresolution. All at once a terrible voice, close at hand, caused him to start with great trepidation:—it was nothing but a couple of turkeys who had set up a gobbling from their roost on the top of the barn. Josh looked up, and beheld, by the light of the moon, the old turkey cosily perched by the side of his mate; the sight was overpowering. "Ah! happy, happy turkey!" he mentally exclaimed, and turned about to proceed up the yard, but the next moment felt a violent cut across the broadest part of his nose. He started back again, but discovered it to be only a clothes-line which he had run against.—"The course of true love never did run smooth." He went fearfully on, thinking of the connubial felicities of the turkey tribe, and the perils of clothes-lines, till he found himself at the door, where he stood fifteen minutes undetermined what to do; and if he had not bethought himself of the precaution of peeping in at the window, it is doubtful whether he would have mustered the courage to enter. But peep he did, and spied Hannah all alone at her knitting-work. This sight emboldened him, and he bolted in without knocking.

What precise sort of compliments Josh made use of in introducing himself, never could be discovered, for Josh laboured under such a confusion of the brain at the time, that he lost all recollection of what passed till he found himself seated in a flag-bottomed chair with a most uncomfort-

ably deep hollow in it. He looked up, and actually saw Hannah sitting in the chimney corner knitting a pepper-and-salt stocking.

"Quite industrious to-night," said Josh.

"Don't know that," replied Hannah.

"Sure on't," returned Josh. "Guess now you've knit from four to six pearl at the lowest calculation."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Hannah.

"Tarnation!" said Josh, pretending to be struck with admiration at the exploit, though he knew it was nothing to boast of.

"How's your mother, Josh?" asked Hannah.

"Pretty considerable smart, Hannah; how's *your* mother?"

"So, so," replied Hannah; and here the conversation came to a stand.

Josh fumbled in his pockets and stuck his legs out till they reached nearly across the room, in hopes to think of something more to say; but in vain. He then scratched his head, but there appeared to be nothing in it.

"Is't possible," thought he, "that I'm actually here a courting?"

He could hardly believe it, and began to feel very awkward.

"I swow!" he exclaimed, opening his eyes as wide as he could.

"What's the matter?" asked Hannah, a little startled.

"Cotch a 'tarnal great musquash this forenoon."

"Ah!" said Hannah, "how big was it?"

"Big as all out-doors!"

"Lawful heart!" exclaimed Hannah.

Josh now felt a little more at his ease, finding the musquash helped him on so bravely. He hitched his chair about seven feet at a single jerk, nearer to Hannah, and exclaimed,

"Tell ye what, Hannah, I'm all creation for catching musquashes."

"Well, I want to know!" replied Hannah.

Josh twisted his eyes into a squint, and gave her a look of melting tenderness. Hannah perceived it, and did not know whether to laugh or be scared; so, to compromise the matter, she pretended to be taken with a fit of coughing. Josh felt his heart begin to beat, and was fully convinced he was courting, or something very like it; but what to do next was the question.

"Shall I kiss her?" thought he. "No, no, it's a *lectle*

too early for that; but I'll tell her I love her." At this thought his heart went bump! bump! bump! harder than ever.

"Hannah!" he exclaimed, in a squeaking voice, and stopped short.

"Hey, Josh!" said Hannah.

"Hannah, I—I—" he rolled up the whites of his eyes, in a most supplicating leer, but the word stuck in his throat. Hannah looked directly in his face; he was in a dreadful puzzle what to say, for he was obliged to say something. His eye fell by accident on a gridiron hanging in the chimney corner:

"What a terrible crack your gridiron's got in it!" exclaimed he.

"Poh!" said Hannah.

Here the conversation came again to a dead stop, for Josh had so exhausted himself in this effort to break the ice, that he was not master of his faculties for several minutes; and when he came fairly to his senses, he found himself counting the tickings of an old wooden clock that stood in the corner. He counted and counted till he had numbered three hundred and ninety-seven ticks, when he luckily heard a cow lowing out of doors.

"Ugh!" said he, "whose cow's that?"

"Drummer Tucker's," replied Hannah.

"Drummer Tucker's! Well, I want to know!"

This reply suggested an idea.

"Hannah," asked he, "did you ever see a dromedary?"

"No; did you, Josh?"

"No," returned Josh, "I never see nothin' in my life but a green monkey; and then I was a'most skeered to death!"

"Lawful heart! Mercy's sake!" exclaimed Hannah, and here the conversation came to a pause again.

The longer they sat, the more awkwardly Josh found himself situated; he sat bolt upright in his chair, with his knees close together and his head stooping forward in such a manner that his long queue stuck out horizontally behind, and his eyes stuck out horizontally before, like those of a lobster. For several minutes he sat contemplating the handle of the warming-pan that hung by the side of the fire-place; and then gradually elevating his line of vision, came in sight of a huge crook-necked squash lying on the mantel-piece. Then he looked at Hannah, and then at the dish-cloth in the mouth of the oven, and from the dish-cloth made a transition back to the warming-pan.

"Courting," thought Josh, "is awful hard work." The perspiration stood on his forehead, and his eel-skin queue pulled so tight that he began to fear the top of his head was coming off; but not a word could he say. And just at that moment a green stick of wood upon the fire began to sing in dismal tone, "*Que, que, que, que, que.*" Nothing frets the nerves more when a body is a little fidgetty, than the singing and sputtering of a stick of wood. Josh felt worse than ever, but the stick kept on: *que, que, que, quiddle de dee, que, que, quiddledy quiddledy que, que, que.* Josh caught up the tongs and gave the fire a tremendous poke. This exertion somewhat relieved him.

"Hannah!" said he, hitching his chair a yard nearer.

"Well, Josh."

"Now," thought Josh, "*I will tell I love her.*"

"Hannah," said he again, "I—" He stared so wildly and made such a horrible grimace that Hannah bounced from her chair. "Hannah, I say," repeated he; but here again his courage failed him.

"What say, Josh?"

"I—I—it's a grand time for turnips," said Josh. "Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

"Poh!" returned Hannah, "let alone of my apron-string, you Josh."

Josh sat in silence and despair for some time longer, growing more and more nervous every moment. Presently the stick of wood burst out squeaking again in the most doleful style imaginable: *Quiddledy, quiddledy quee-ee-ee-iddledy, que, que quiddledy quiddledy que que que-ee-ee-ee-ee.* Josh could not bear it any longer, for he verily believed his skull-bone was splitting.

"I swaggers!" he exclaimed, "this is too bad!"

"What's the matter, Josh?" asked Hannah, in considerable alarm.

"Suthin' ails me," said Josh.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Hannah; "shan't I get you a mug of cider?"

"Do," replied Josh, "for I don't feel as I used to did."

Hannah ran down to the cellar and returned with a quart mug of cider. Josh put it to his lips and took a heavy pull. It was what the farmers call *hard* cider, and Josh verily feared his eyes would start out of his head while he was drinking it, but after several desperate gulps he succeeded in draining the mug. Then pulling a blue and white check handkerchief

from his pocket, he rubbed his face very hard, and looked straight into the fire.

But in a few minutes he found his spirits wonderfully rising; he lifted up his eyes, hitched his chair nearer, sent Hannah a sly look, and actually gave a loud giggle. Hannah giggled in reply, for giggling, like gaping, is contagious. In two minutes more, his courage rose higher; he threw one of his long legs across the other, gave a grin, slapped his hand upon his knee, and exclaimed as bold as a lion,

"Hannah, if a young feller was for to go to offer for to kiss you, what d'ye think ye should do?"

Having uttered these words, he stopped short, his mouth wide open, in gaping astonishment at his own temerity.

If Hannah did not blush, it was probably owing to her being at that moment engaged in blowing the fire at a desperate rate with an enormous pair of broken-winded bellows, which occupation had set her all in a blowze.

She understood the hint, and replied,

"Guess ye'd better not try, Josh."

Whether this was intended as a warning, or an invitation, never could be satisfactorily known. Josh did not stop to inquire, but he thought it too good a chance to be lost.

"I'll kiss her! by Golly!" he exclaimed to himself.

He made a bounce from his chair and seized the nozzle of the bellows, which Hannah was sticking at that moment under a huge iron pot over the fire. Now, in this pot were apples a stewing, and so it happened that Hannah, in the confusion occasioned by the visit of Josh, had made a mistake and put in sour apples instead of sweet ones: sour apples when cooking, everybody knows, are apt to explode like bomb-shells. Hannah had been puffing at the bellows with might and main, and raised the heat to a mischievous degree; there was no safety-valve in the pot-lid, and just as Josh was upon the point of snatching a kiss, whop! the whole contents of the pot went off in their faces!

At the same moment the door flew open, and the whole Downer family came in from meeting. Such a sight as they beheld! There stood Josh beplastered with apple-sauce from head to foot, and frightened worse than if he had seen a green monkey. Hannah made her escape, and left Josh to explain the catastrophe. He rolled up his eyes in utter dismay.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Peggy Downer.

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!" replied Josh, and that was all he could say.

"Goodness' sake! Josh Beanpole! is that you?" asked Mother Downer, for Josh was so beplastered, beluted, and transubstantiated by the apple-sauce, that she did not at first discover who it was.

"I d'n know—no, n't I," said Josh.

"What a spot o' work!" exclaimed Peggy.

Josh looked down at his pantaloons.

"Oh! for ever!" he exclaimed, "this beats the ginerall trainin'!"

How matters were explained, and how Josh got safe home, I cannot stop to explain. As to the final result of the courtship, the reader may as well be informed that Josh had too much genuine Yankee resolution to be beaten away from his prize by a broadside of baked apples. In fact, it was but a few months afterwards, that Deacon Powderpost, the town clerk, was digging all alone in the middle of his ten-acre potato field, and spied Josh Beanpole looming up over the top of the hill. Josh looked all around the horizon, and finding no other living soul to be seen, came scrambling over the potato hills, and got right behind the Deacon, where in about a quarter of an hour he mustered courage sufficient to ask him to step aside, as he had a communication for his private ear. To make a long story short, Josh and Hannah were published the next Sunday.

XXX.

PETER BRUSH, THE GREAT USED UP.

It was November; soon after election time, when a considerable portion of the political world are apt to be despondent, and external things appear to do their utmost to keep them so. November, the season of dejection, when pride itself loses its imperious port; when ambition gives place to melancholy; when beauty hardly takes the trouble to look in the glass; and when existence doffs its rainbow hues, and wears an aspect of such dull, common-place reality, that hope leaves the world for a temporary excursion, and those who cannot do without her inspiring presence, borrow the aid of pistols, cords, and chemicals, and send themselves on a longer journey, expecting to find her by the way:—a season, when the hair will not stay in curl; when the walls weep dewy drops, to the great detriment

of paper-hangings, and of every species of colouring with which they are adorned; when the banisters distil liquids, anything but beneficial to white gloves; when nature fills the ponds, and when window-washing is the only species of amusement at all popular among housekeepers.

It was on the worst of nights in that worst of seasons. The atmosphere was in a condition of which it is difficult to speak with respect, much as we may be disposed to applaud the doings of nature. It was damp, foggy, and drizzling; to sum up its imperfections in a sonorous and descriptive epithet, it was "orrid muggy weather."

The air hung about the wayfarer in warm, unhealthy folds, and extracted the starch from his shirt-collar and from the bosom of his dickey, with as much rapidity as it robbed his spirits of their elasticity, and melted the sugar of self-complacency from his mind.

The street lamps emitted a ghastly white glare, and were so hemmed in with vapoury wreaths, that their best efforts could not project a ray of light three feet from the burner. Gloom was universal, and any change, even to the heat of Africa, or to the frosts of the arctic circle, would, in comparison, have been delightful. The pigs' tails no longer waved in graceful sinuities; while the tail of each night-roving, hectoring bull-dog ceased flaunting toward the clouds, a banner of wrath and defiance to punier creatures, and hung down drooping and dejected, an emblem of a heart little disposed to quarrel and offence.

The ornamentals of the brute creation being thus below par, it was not surprising that men, with cares on their shoulders and raggedness in their trousers, should likewise be more melancholy than on occasions of a brighter character.

Every one at all subject to the "skyey influences," who has had trouble enough to tear his clothes, and to teach him that the staple of this mundane existence is not exclusively made up of fun, has felt that philosophy is but a barometrical affair, and that he who is proof against sorrow when the air is clear and bracing, may be a very miserable wretch, with no greater cause, when the wind sits in another quarter.

Peter Brush is a man of this susceptible class. His nervous system is of the most delicate organization, and responds to the changes of the weather, as an Æolian harp sings to the fitful swellings of the breeze.

Peter was abroad on the night of which we speak; either because, unlike the younger Brutus, he had no Portia near to tell him that such exposure was "not physical," and that it was the part of prudence to go to bed, or that, although aware of the

dangers of miasma to a man of his constitution, he did not happen at that precise moment to have access to either house or bed; in his opinion, two essential pre-requisites to couching himself, as he regarded taking it *al fresco*, on a cellar door, not likely to answer any sanitary purpose.

We incline ourselves to the opinion that he was in the dilemma last mentioned, as it had previously been the fate of other great men. But be that as it may, Mr Peter Brush was in the street, as melancholy as an unbraced drum, "a gib-ed cat, or a lugged bear."

Seated upon the curb, with his feet across the gutter, he placed his elbow on a stepping-stone, and like Juliet on the balcony, leaned his head upon his hand—a hand that would perhaps have been the better of a covering, though none would have been rash enough to volunteer to be a glove upon it. He was in a dilapidated condition—out at elbows, out at knees, out of pocket, out of office, out of spirits, and out in the street—an "out and outer" in every respect, and as *outré* a mortal as ever the eye of man did rest upon.

For some time, Mr Brush's reflections had been silent. Following Hamlet's advice, he "gave them an understanding, but no tongue;" and he relieved himself at intervals by spitting forlornly into the kennel. At length, suffering his locked hands to fall between his knees, and heaving a deep sigh, he spoke:

"A long time ago, my ma used to put on her specs and say, 'Peter, my son, put not your trust in princes;' and from that day to this I haven't done anything of the kind, because none on 'em ever wanted to borry nothing of me: and I never see a prince or a king, but one or two, and they had been rotated out of office, to borry nothing of them. Princes! pooh! Put not your trust in politicianers—their's my sentiments. You might jist as well try to hold an eel by the tail. I don't care which side they're on, for I've tried both, and I know. Put not your trust in politicianers, or you'll get a hyst.

"Ten years ago it came into my head that things weren't going on right; so I pretty nearly gave myself up tee-totally to the good of the republic, and left the shop to look out for itself. I was brimfull of patriotism, and so uneasy in my mind for the salvation of freedom, I couldn't work. I tried to guess which side was going to win, and I stuck to it like wax; sometimes I was a-one side, sometimes I was a-tother, and sometimes I straddled till the election was over, and came up jist in time to jine the hurrah. It was good I was after; and what good could I do if I wasn't on the 'lected side? But, after all, it was never a bit of use. Whenever the battle was over, no matter

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what side was sharing out the loaves and the fishes, and I stepped up, I'll be hanged if they didn't cram all they could into their own mouths, put their arms over some, and grab at all the rest with their paws, and say, 'Go away, white man, you ain't capable.' Capable! what's the reason I ain't capable? I've got as extensive a throat as any of 'em, and I could swallow the loaves and fishes without choking, if each loaf was as big as a grindstone and each fish as big as a sturgeon. Give Peter a chance, and leave him alone for that. Then, another time when I called—'I want some spoils,' says I; 'a small bucket-full of spoils. Whichever side gets in, shares the spoils, don't they?' So they first grinned, and then they ups and tells me that virtue like mine was its own reward, and that spoils might spoil me. But it was *no* spoils that spoilt me, and *no* loaf and fish that starved me—I'm spoilt because I couldn't get either. Put not your trust in politicianers—I say it agin. Both sides used me jist alike.

"Here I've been serving my country, more or less, these ten years, like a patriot—going to town meetings, hurraing my daylight, and getting as blue as blazes—blocking the windows, getting licked fifty times, and having more black eyes and bloody noses than you could shake a stick at, all for the common good, and for the purity of our illegal rights—and all for what? Why for nix. If any good has come of it, the country has put it into her own pocket, and swindled me out of my arnings. I can't get no office! Republics is ungrateful! It wasn't reward I was after. I scorns the base insinivation. I only wanted to be took care of, and have nothing to do but to take care of the public, and I've only got half—nothing to do! Being took care of was the main thing. Republics is ungrateful; I'm swaggared if they ain't. This is the way old sojers is served."

Peter, having thus unpacked his o'erfraught heart, heaved a sigh or two, as every one does after a recapitulation of their own injuries, and remained for a few minutes wrapped in abstraction.

"Well, well," said he, mournfully, swaying his head to and fro after the sagacious fashion of Lord Burleigh, "live and learn—live and learn—the world's not what a man takes it for before he finds it out. Whiskers grow a good deal sooner than experience—genus and patriotism ain't got no chance—heigh-ho!—But anyhow, a man might as well be under kiver as out in the open air in sich weather as this. It's as cheap laying down as it is settin' up, and there's not so much wear and tear about it."

With a groan, a yawn, and a sigh, Peter Brush slowly arose, and stretching himself like a drowsy lion, he walked towards the steps of a neighbouring house. Having reached the

top of the flight, he turned about and looked round with a scrutinizing glance, peering both up and down the street, to ascertain that none of the hereditary enemies of the Brushes were in the vicinity. Being satisfied on that score, he prepared to enjoy all the comfort that his peculiar situation could command. According to the modern system of warfare, he carried no baggage to encumber his motions, and was always ready to bivouac without troublesome preliminaries. He therefore placed himself on the upper step, so that he was just within the doorway, his head reclining against one side of it, and his feet braced against the other, blockading the passage in a very effectual manner. He adjusted himself in a position as carefully as the Sybarite who was annoyed at the wrinkle of a rose-leaf on his couch, grunting at each motion like a Daniel Lambert at his toilet, and he made minute alterations in his attitude several times before he appeared perfectly satisfied that he had effected the best arrangements that could be devised.

After reposing for a while as if "the flinty and steel couch of war were his thrice-driven bed of down," he moved his head with an exclamation of impatience at the hardness of the wall, and taking his time-worn beaver, he crumpled it up, and mollified the austerity of his bolster by using the crushed hat as a pillow.

"That will do," ejaculated Brush, clasping his hands before him, and twirling his thumbs; and he then closed his eyes for the purpose of reflecting upon his condition with a more perfect concentration of thought than can be obtained when outward objects distract the mind. But thinking in this way is always a hazardous experiment, whether it be after dinner, or in the evening; and Peter Brush soon unwittingly fell into a troubled, murmuring sleep, in which his words were mere repetitions of what he had said before, the general scope of the argument being to prove the received axiom of former times, that republics do not distribute their favours in proportion to services rendered, and that, in the speaker's opinion, they are not, in this respect, much better than the princes against whom his mother cautioned him. Such, at least, was the conviction of Mr Brush; at which he had arrived, not by theory and distant observation, but by his own personal experience.

It is a long lane which has no turning, and it is a long sleep in the open air, especially in a city, which does not meet with interruption. Brush found it so in this instance, as he had indeed more than once before. Several gentlemen, followed by a dog, arrived at the foot of the steps, and, after a short conversation, dispersed each to his several home. One, however,

remained—the owner of the dog—who, whistling for his canine favourite, took out his night-key, and walked up the steps. The dog, bounding before his master, suddenly stopped, and after attentively regarding the recumbent Brush, uttered a sharp rapid bark.

The rapidity of mental operations is such that it frequently happens, if sleep be disturbed by external sounds, that the noise is instantly caught up by the ear, and incorporated with the subject of the dream—or perhaps a dream is instantaneously formed upon the nucleus suggested by the vibration of the tympanum. The bark of the dog had one of these effects upon Mr. Brush.

"Bow! wow! waugh!" said the dog.

"There's a fellow making a speech against our side," muttered Peter; "but it's all talk—where's your facts?—print your speech in pamphlet form, and I'll answer it. Hurray for us!—everybody else is rascals—nothing but ruination when that fellow's principles get the upper hand—our side for ever—we're the boys!"

"Be still, Ponto!" said the gentleman. "Now, Sir, be pleased to get up, and carry yourself to some other place. I don't know which side has the honour of claiming you, but you are certainly on the wrong side at present."

"Don't be official and trouble yourself about other people's business," said Brush, trying to open his eyes; "don't be official, for it isn't the genteel thing."

"Not official! what do you mean by that? I shall be very official, and trundle you down the steps if you are not a little more rapid in your motions."

"Oh, very well," responded Brush, as he wheeled round in a sitting posture, and fronted the stranger—"very well! be as sassy as you please; I suppose you've got an office, by the way you talk—you've got one of the fishes, though perhaps it is but a minny, and I ain't! but if I had, I'd show you a thing or two. Be sassy, be anything, Mr Noodle-soup. I don't know which side you're on either, but I do know one thing; it isn't saying much for your boss politicianer that he chose you when I must have been on his list for promotion; that's all, though you are so stiff, and think yourself pretty to look at. But them that's pretty to look at ain't always good 'uns to go, or you wouldn't be poking here. Be off; there's no more business before this meeting, and you may adjourn. It's moved, seconded, and carried—pay the landlord for the use of the room as you go."

The stranger, now becoming somewhat amused, felt a disposition to entertain himself a little with Peter.

"How does it happen," said he, "that such a public-spirited individual as you appear to be should find himself in this condition? You've had a little too much of the *stimulantibus*, I fear."

"I don't know Greek, but I guess what you mean," was the answer. "It's owing to the weather—part to the weather, and part because republics is ungrateful; that's considerable the biggest part. Either part is excuse enough, and both together makes it a credit. When it's such weather as this, it takes the electricizing fluid out of you; and if you want to feel something like; do you know what 'something like' is? it's cat-bird, jam up; if you want to feel so, you must pour a little of the electricizing fluid into you. In this kind of weather you must tune yourself up, and get resumed, or you ain't good for much, tuned up to concert pitch. But all that's a trifle; put not your trust in politicians."

"And why not, Mr Rosum?"

"Why not! Help us up—there—steady she goes—hold on! Why not?—look at me, and you'll see the why as large as life. I'm the why you mustn't put your trust in politicians. I'm a rig'lar patriot—look at my coat. I'm all for the public good—twig the holes in my trousers. I'm steady in my course, and I'm upright in my conduct—don't let me fall down. I've tried all parties, year in and year out, just by way of making myself popular and agreeable; and I've tried to be on both sides at once," roared Brush, with great emphasis, as he slipped and fell, "and this is the end of it!"

His auditor laughed heartily at this striking illustration of the political course of Peter Brush, and seemed quite gratified with so strong a proof of the danger of endeavouring to be on two sides at once. He therefore assisted the fallen to rise.

"Are you hurt?"

"No, I'm used to being knocked about—the steps and the pavement are no worse than other people—they're like politicians—you can't put any trust in 'em. But," continued Brush, drawing a roll of crumpled paper from the crown of his still more crumpled hat, "see here now, you're a clever fellow, and I'll get you to sign my recommendation. Here's a splendid character for me all ready wrote down, so it won't give you any trouble, only to put your name to it."

"But what office does it recommend you for? what kind of recommendation is it?"

"It's a circular recommend—a slap at anything that's going."

"Firing into the flock, I suppose!"

"That's it exactly, good character, fit for any fat post either under the city government, the state government, or the ginerall government. Now jist put your fist to it," added Peter, in his most persuasive tones, as he smoothed the paper over his knee, spread it upon the step, and produced a bit of lead pencil, which he first moistened with his lips, and then offered to his interlocutor.

"Excuse me," was the laughing response; "it's too dark, I can't see either to read or write. But what made you a politician? Haven't you got a trade?"

"Trade! yes," replied Brush, contemptuously; "but what's a trade, when a feller's got a soul! I love my country, and I want an office—I don't care what, so it's fat and easy. I've a genus for governing—for telling people what to do, and looking at 'em do it. I want to take care of my country, and I want my country to take care of me. Head work is the trade I'm made for—talking—that's my line—talking in the streets, talking in the bar rooms, talking in the oyster cellars. Talking is the grease for the waggon wheels of the body politic and the body corpulent, and nothing will go on well till I've got my say in the matter; for I can talk all day, and most of the night, only stopping to wet my whistle. But parties is all alike—all ungrateful; no respect for genus—no respect for me. I've tried both sides, got nothing, and I've a great mind to knock off and call it half a day. I would, if my genus didn't make me talk, and think, and sleep so much I can't find time to work."

"Well," said the stranger, "you must find time to go away. You're too noisy. How would you like to go before the Mayor?"

"No, I'd rather not. Stop—now I think of it, I've asked him before; but perhaps if you'd speak a good word, he'd give me the first vacancy. Introduce me properly, and say that I want something to do shocking—no, not something to do—I want something to get; my genus won't let me work. I'd like to have a fat salary, and to be general superintendent of things in general and nothing in particular, so I could walk about the streets, and see what is going on. Now, put my best leg foremost—say how I can make speeches, and how I can hurray at elections."

"Away with you," said the stranger, as he ran up the steps and opened the door. "Make no noise in this neighbourhood, or you'll be taken care of soon enough."

"Well, now, if that isn't ungrateful," soliloquized Brush; "keep me here talking, and then slap the door right in my face."

That's the way politicianers serve me, and it's about all I'd a right to expect. Oh, pshaw! sich a world—sich a people!"

Peter rolled up his "circular recommend," put it in his hat, and slowly sauntered away. As he is not yet provided for, he should receive the earliest attention of parties, or disappointment may induce him to abandon both, take the field "upon his own hook," and constitute an independent faction under the name of the "Brush party," the cardinal principle of which will be that peculiarly novel impulse to action, hostility to all "politicianers" who are not on the same side.

XXXI.

COUSIN SALLY DILLIARD.

A LEGAL SKETCH IN THE "OLD NORTH STATE."

SCENE:—*A Court of Justice in North Carolina.*

A beardless disciple of Themis rises, and thus addresses the court:

"May it please your worships, and you, gentlemen of the jury, since it has been my fortune (good or bad, I will not say) to exercise myself in legal disquisitions, it has never befallen me to be obliged to prosecute so direful, marked, and malicious an assault—a more wilful, violent, dangerous battery—and finally, a more diabolical breach of the peace, has seldom happened in a civilized country; and I dare say it has seldom been your duty to pass upon one so shocking to benevolent feelings, as this which took place over at Captain Rice's, in this county. But you will hear from the witnesses."

The witnesses being sworn, two or three were examined and deposed. One said that he heard the noise, and did not see the fight; another, that he had seen the row, but didn't know who struck first; and a third, that he was very drunk, and couldn't say much about the skrimmage.

Lawyer Chops. I am sorry, gentlemen, to have occupied your time with the stupidity of the witnesses examined. It arises, gentlemen, altogether from misapprehension on my part. Had I known, as I now do, that I had a witness in attendance who was well acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, and

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 a people!"
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 hostility to all

who was able to make himself clearly understood by the court and jury, I should not so long have trespassed upon your time and patience. Come forward, Mr Harris, and be sworn.

So forward comes the witness, a fat, shuffy old man, a "bettle" corned, and took his oath with an air.

Chors. Harris, we wish you to tell all about the riot that happened the other day at Captain Rice's; and as a good deal of time has already been wasted in circumlocution, we wish you to be compendious, and at the same time as explicit as possible.

Harris. Adzackly (giving the lawyer a knowing wink, and at the same time clearing his throat). Captain Rice, he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard, she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she moutn't go? I told Cousin Sally Dilliard that my wife was poorly, being as how she had a touch of the rheumatics in the hip, and the big swamp was in the road, and the big swamp was up, for there had been a heap of rain lately; but howsomever, as it was she, Cousin Sally Dilliard, my wife she mout go. Well, Cousin Sally Dilliard then axed me if Mose he moutn't go? I told Cousin Sally Dilliard that he was the foreman of the crap, and the crap was smartly in the grass; but howsomever as it was she, Cousin Sally Dilliard, Mose he mout go.

Chops. In the name of common sense, Mr Harris, what do you mean by this rigmarole?

Witness. Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she moutn't go? I told Cousin Sally Dilliard—

Chops. Stop, Sir, if you please; we don't want to hear anything about your cousin Sally Dilliard and your wife. Tell us about the fight at Rice's.

Witness. Well, I will, Sir, if you will let me.

Chops. Well, Sir, go on.

Witness. Well, Sir, Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she moutn't go—

Chops. There it is again. Witness, please to stop.

Witness. Well, Sir, what do you want?

Chops. We want to know about the fight; and you must not proceed in this impertinent story. Do you know anything about the matter before the court?

Witness. To be sure I do.

Chops. Well, go on and tell it, and nothing else.

Witness. Well, Captain Rice he gin a treat—

Chops. This is intolerable. May it please the court, I move

that this witness be committed for a contempt; he seems to be trifling with this court.

Court. Witness, you are now before a court of justice, and unless you behave yourself in a more becoming manner, you will be sent to gaol; so begin and tell what you know about the fight at Captain Rice's.

Witness [alarmed]. Well, gentlemen, Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard—

Chops. I hope the witness may be ordered into custody.

Court [after deliberating]. Mr Attorney, the court is of opinion that we may save time by telling witness to go on his own way. Proceed, Mr Harris, with your story, but stick to the point.

Witness. Yes, gentlemen. Well, Captain Rice he gin a treat, and Cousin Sally Dilliard she came over to our house, and axed me if my wife she mout go? I told Cousin Sally Dilliard that my wife she was poorly, being as how she had the rheumatics in the hips, and the big swamp was up; but howsomever, as it was she, Cousin Sally Dilliard, my wife she mout go. Well, Cousin Sally Dilliard then axed me if Mose he moutn't go. I told Cousin Sally Dilliard as how Mose he was foreman of the crap, and the crap was smartly in the grass; but howsomever, as it was she, Cousin Sally Dilliard, Mose he mout go. So they goes on together, Mose, my wife, and Cousin Sally Dilliard, and they came to the big swamp and it was up, as I was telling you; but being as how there was a log across the big swamp, Cousin Sally Dilliard and Mose, like genteel felks, they walked the log; but my wife, like a darned fool, hoisted her coats and waded through. *And that's all I know about the fight.*

XXXII.

THE AGE OF WONDERS.

My neighbour over the way, Colonel Swallowmore, thinks his self born in the age of wonders:—and no wonder he thinks so, for he reads the newspapers and believes them! It is astonishing how gravely the Colonel gulps down every crude lump of monstrous fudge the papers contain. Sea-serpents, crook-necked squashes, consumption cured, talking pigs, and three-legged cats, are nothing to an appetite like his. He be-

believes electioneering speeches and predictions of political quidnuncs. All is fish that comes to his net.

"These are times! Mr Titterwell, these are times, indeed!" says he to me, with a most rueful visage, as he lays down the newspaper. "What *are* we coming to! People have got to *such* a pass! Something is certainly going to happen before long. I'm really, really frightened to think of it. There never were such doings in my day. Positively I've got so now that I an't surprised at anything!"

And so he shakes his head, hitches up his breeches, sticks his spectacles higher up his nose, and reads the wonders of the day over again.

Twenty-eight several times has this country been irretrievably ruined since I knew the Colonel. Seven times has the world come quite to an end. Nineteen times have we had the hardest winter ever known within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Twenty-one times there never was seen such a backward spring. Forty-seven times the approaching session of Congress has been one of uncommon interest; and thirteen thousand nine hundred and sixty-six times has death snatched away the best man upon earth, leaving mortals inconsolable, and society with an immense void.

The mental agitations he has undergone in pondering upon the "wonderful wonders" that spring up as plenty as grasshoppers in this wonderful age, are not to be described; for the Colonel takes an immense interest in public affairs, and cannot see the universe go to ruin about his ears without pangs of sympathy. Whatever molehill he stumbles upon, he makes a mountain of it.

He thought the Salem mill-dam absolutely necessary to the balance of power, and was certain that the bridge over Peg's Run was the only means of saving the nation.

He went to bed in a great fright on reading in the paper that Emerson's Spelling-book would overthrow the liberties of the country; and he was struck with the deepest alarm when he heard of the feud that had broken out between the Houses of Correction and Reformation about a cart-load of chips.

I shall never forget the anxiety that beset him last summer when the City Council could not come to a choice about the Superintendent of Drains. The newspapers were full of the affair, and the Colonel, I verily believe, would have worried himself into a nervous fever, had this alarming schism between the two branches of the city government been carried much further.

"A strange affair, Mr Titterwell, a very mysterious affair," said he. "There are some dark, under-ground manœuvres going

on in this matter, depend upon it; and really the Mayor and Aldermen—"here he turned up the whites of his eyes and shook his head. Heaven only knows what he thought of those great dignitaries. However, the affair of the drains got through without any great catastrophe to folk above-ground, that ever I could learn, and the Colonel's consternation subsided for that time.

All the world were going mad the other day about white mustard-seed.

"Pray, Colonel," said I, "what is white mustard-seed to you or me? Can't we eat our bread and butter, and sleep till six in the morning, without troubling our heads about white mustard-seed? Didn't we fight the battles of the revolution without white mustard-seed? Didn't Samson carry off the gates of Gaza without white mustard-seed? Didn't your blessed old grandmother knit stockings and live to the age of ninety without white mustard-seed? Then what's the use of minding the dolts in the newspapers who tell you that white mustard-seed is better than meat, drink, and sunshine, and that we shall all die untimely deaths unless we take white mustard-seed?"

The Colonel could not understand it: it was a great mystery indeed, but the newspapers were full of it, and he was convinced white mustard-seed had something in it, that would come out in due time. White mustard-seed, however, has had its day; and the Colonel has probably taken to saw-dust, as I heard him talk of Dr Graham last week.

But of all mortals the Colonel is the most prone to sympathize with the unfortunate public upon the loss of great men. I popped in upon him the day before yesterday, and found him lamenting a huge public calamity.

Three great men had fallen in Israel—an eminent clergyman, an eminent country representative, and an eminent dealer in salt-fish on Long Wharf. The Colonel was triply dolorous upon the matter; society, business, politics, had suffered an immense loss; a loss incalculable, irreparable, and so forth.

I assured the Colonel there was no great cause for apprehension, for the world was pretty sure to turn round once in twenty-four hours, whether great men died or lived.

"The fact is, Colonel," said I, "great men may die as fast as they please for aught I care. I have never been frightened by the death of them since an adventure that happened to me in my ninth year, when I lived in the country."

"What is that?" asked the Colonel.

"I'll tell you," said I.

"On a certain day—a day never to be forgotten by me, news arrived in town that the Governor was dead. No sovereign prince,

pontiff, or potentate on the face of the earth, ever appeared so gigantic and formidable to my childish eyes, as that harmless gentleman the Governor of Massachusetts. Imagine the shock occasioned by this announcement! Straightway the bells began tolling, people collected in groups, quidnunes scoured from place to place, gossips chattered, children gaped in dumb astonishment, and old women with dismal faces ran about croaking 'The Governor is dead!'

"To me these things seemed to betoken the general wreck of nature, for how the order of the universe could subsist after the death of the Governor, was beyond my comprehension. I expected the sun and moon to fall, the stars to shoot from their spheres, and my grandfather's mill-pond to upset. The horrible forebodings under which I lay down to sleep that night, are not to be described, and it was a long time ere I could close my eyes. In the morning I was awakened by a dreadful rumbling noise. 'The Governor is dead!' I exclaimed, starting up in a terrible fright. The noise continued: I listened, and discovered it to be nothing more than my old grandmother grinding coffee!

"The effect of this prodigious anti-climax can hardly be imagined; never in my life was I so puzzled and confounded as at the first moment of this discovery.

"What!" said I to myself, 'is the Governor dead, and yet people grind coffee? then it seems we are to eat our breakfast just as if nothing had happened. Is a great man of no more consequence than this?'

"A new ray of light broke in upon me. I fell to pondering upon the occurrence, and five minutes' pondering completely demolished the power supreme with which many a pompous owl had stalked through my imagination.

"From that moment, governors, town-clerks, select-men, representatives, justices of the peace, and great people of every degree, lost nine-tenths of their importance in my eyes, for I plainly saw the world could do without them.

"How often, in after life, have I applied the moral of this incident! How much moving eloquence and dire denunciation have I passed by with the remark:

"That is a great affair, no doubt, but it can't stop a coffee-mill."

XXXIII.

HOW SIMON SUGGS "RAISED JACK."

UNTIL Simon entered his seventeenth year, he lived with his father, an old "hard-shell" Baptist preacher; who, though very pious and remarkably austere, was very avaricious. The old man reared his boys—or endeavoured to do so—according to the strictest requisition of the moral law. But he lived, at the time to which we refer, in Middle Georgia, which was then newly settled; and Simon, whose wits from the time he was a "shirt-tail boy," were always too sharp for his father's, contrived to contract all the coarse vices incident to such a region.

He stole his mother's roosters to fight them at Bob Smith's grocery, and his father's plough-horses to enter them in "quarter" matches at the same place. He pitched dollars with Bob Smith himself, and could "beat him into doll-rags" whenever it came to a measurement. To crown his accomplishments, Simon was tip-top at the game of "old sleds," which was the fashionable game of that era, and was early initiated in the mystery of "stocking the papers."

The vicious habits of Simon were, of course, a sore trouble to his father, Elder Jedediah. He reasoned, he counselled, he remonstrated, he lashed, but Simon was an incorrigible, irclaimable devil.

One day the simple-minded old man came rather unexpectedly to the field where he had left Simon and Ben, and a negro boy named Bill, at work. Ben was still following his plough, but Simon and Bill were in a fence-corner very earnestly engaged at "seven up." Of course the game was instantly suspended, as soon as they spied the old man sixty or seventy yards off, striding towards them.

It was evidently a "gone case" with Simon and Bill; but our hero determined to make the best of it. Putting the cards into one pocket, he coolly picked up the small coins which constituted the stake, and fobbed them in the other, remarking,

"Well, Bill, this game's blocked; we'd as well quit."

"But, Massa Simon," remarked the boy, "half dat money's mine. An't you gwine to lemme hab 'em?"

"Oh, never mind the money, Bill; the old man's going to take the bark off of both of us—and besides, with the hand I

helt when we quit, I should 'a beat you and won it all any way."

"Well, but, Massa Simon, we nebber finish de game, and de rule—"

"Go to Old Scratch with your rule!" said the impatient Simon; "don't you see daddy's right down upon us, with an armful of hickories? I tell you I hilt nothin' but trumps, and could 'a beat the horns off of a billy-goat. Don't that satisfy you? Somehow or nother your d—d hard to please!" About this time a thought struck Simon, and in a low tone—for by this time the Reverend Jedediah was close at hand—he continued, "but maybe daddy don't know, *right down sure*, what we've been doin'. Let's try him with a lie—twon't hurt no way; let's tell him we've been playin' mumble-peg."

Bill was perforce compelled to submit to this inequitable adjustment of his claim of a share of the *trumps*; and of course agreed to the game of mumble-peg. A *peg* was settled and a peg driven in the ground, slyly and hurriedly between Simon's legs as he sat on the ground, just as the old man reached the spot. He carried under his left arm several neatly-trimmed sprouts of formidable length, while in his left hand he held one which he was intently engaged in divesting of its superfluous twigs.

"Soho! youngsters!—*you* in the fence-corner, and the *crop* in the grass? what saith the Scriptur', Simon? 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard,' and so forth and so on. What in the round creation of the yearth have you and that nigger been a-doin'?"

Bill shook with fear, but Simon was cool as a cucumber, and answered his father to the effect that they had been wasting a little time in a game of mumble-peg.

"Mumble-peg! mumble-peg!" repeated old Mr Suggs, "what's that?"

Simon explained the process of *rooting* for the peg; how the operator got upon his knees, keeping his arms stiff by his side, leaned forward and extracted the peg with his teeth.

"So you git *upon your knees*, do you, to pull up that nasty little stick! you'd better git upon 'em to ask mercy for your sinful souls, and for a dyin' world. But let's see one o' you git the peg up now."

The first impulse of our hero was to volunteer to gratify the curiosity of his worthy sire, but a glance at the old man's countenance changed his "notion," and he remarked that "Bill was a long ways the best hand."

Bill, who did not deem Simon's modesty an omen favour-

able to himself, was inclined to reciprocate compliments with his young master; but a gesture of impatience from the old man set him instantly upon his knees; and, bending forward, he assayed to lay hold with his teeth, of the peg, which Simon, just at that moment, very wickedly pushed half an inch further down.

Just as the breeches and hide of the boy were stretched to the uttermost, old Mr Suggs brought down his longest hickory, with both hands, upon the precise spot where the tension was greatest. With a loud yell, Bill plunged forward, upsetting Simon, and rolled in the grass, rubbing the castigated part with fearful energy. Simon, though overthrown, was unhurt; and he was mentally complimenting himself upon the sagacity which had prevented his illustrating the game of mumble-peg, for the paternal amusement, when his attention was arrested by that worthy person's stooping to pick up something—what is it?—a card upon which Simon had been sitting, and which, therefore, had not gone with the rest of the pack into his pocket.

The simple Mr Suggs had only a vague idea of the paste-board abomination called *cards*; and though he decidedly inclined to the opinion that this was one, he was by no means certain of the fact. Had Simon known this, he would certainly have escaped; but he did not. His father, assuming the look of extreme sapieney which is always worn by the interrogator who does not desire or expect to increase his knowledge by his questions, asked,

"What's this, Simon?"

"The Jack a-dimunts," promptly responded Simon, who gave up all as lost after this *faux pas*.

"What was it doin' down thar, Simon, my sonny?" continued Mr Suggs, in an ironically affectionate tone of voice.

"I had it under my leg thar, to make it on Bill, the first time it come trumps," was the ready reply.

"What's trumps?" asked Mr Suggs, with a view of arriving at the import of the word.

"Nothin' ain't trumps *now*," said Simon, who misapprehended his father's meaning, "but *clubs* was, when you come along and busted up the game."

A part of this answer was Greek to the Reverend Mr Suggs, but a portion of it was full of meaning. They had, then, most unquestionably been "throwing" cards, the scoundrels! the "oudacious" little hellions!

"To the 'Mulberry,' with both on ye! in a hurry," said the old man, sternly.

But the lads were not disposed to be in a "hurry," for "the Mulberry" was the scene of all formal punishment administered during work hours in the field. Simon followed his father, however; but made, as he went along, all manner of "faces" at the old man's back; gesticulated as if he were going to strike him between the shoulders with his fists; and kicking at him so as almost to touch his coat-tail with his shoe. In this style they walked on to the mulberry-tree, in whose shade Simon's brother Ben was resting.

It must not be supposed that, during the walk to the place of punishment, Simon's mind was either inactive or engaged in suggesting the grimaces and contortions wherewith he was pantomimically expressing his irreverent sentiments towards his father. Far from it. The movements of his limbs and features were the mere workings of habit—the self-grinding of the corporeal machine—for which his reasoning half was only remotely responsible. For while Simon's person was thus on its own account, "making game" of old Jedediah, his wits, in view of the anticipated flogging, were dashing, springing, bounding, darting about, in hot chase of some expedient suitable to the necessities of the case—much after the manner in which puss, when Betty, armed with the broom, and hotly seeking vengeance for the pantry robbed or room defiled, has closed upon her the garret doors and windows, attempts all sorts of impossible exits, comes down at last in the corner, with panting side and glaring eye, exhausted and defenceless. Our unfortunate hero could devise nothing by which he could reasonably expect to escape the heavy blows of his father. Having arrived at this conclusion and the "Mulberry" about the same time, he stood with a dogged look, awaiting the issue.

The old man Suggs made no remark to any one while he was seizing up Bill—a process which, though by no means novel to Simon, seemed to excite in him a sort of painful interest. He watched it closely, as if to learn the precise fashion of his father's knot; and when at last Bill was strung up a-tiptoe to a limb, and the whipping commenced, Simon's eye followed every movement of his father's arm; and as each blow descended upon the bare shoulders of his sable friend, his own body writhed and "wriggled" in involuntary sympathy.

"It's the devil!—it's tarnation," said Simon to himself, "to take such a wallop in' as that. Why the old man looks like he wants to git to the holler, if he could—rot his pacter! It's wuth, at the least, fifty cents—je-e-miny, how *that* hurt!—yes, it's wuth three-quarters of a dollar, to take that 'ere lick-

in'! Wonder if I'm 'predestinated,' as old Jed'diah says, to get the feller to it? Lord, how daddy blows! I do wish he'd bust right open, the darn'd old deer-face! If 'twan't for Ben helpin' him, I b'lieve I'd give the old dog a tussel when it comes for my turn. It couldn't make the thing no wuss, if it didn't make it no better. Drot it! what do boys have daddies for, anyhow? 'Taint for nuthin' but jist to beat 'em and work 'em. There's some use in mammies—I kin poke my finger right in the old 'oman's eye, and keep it thar, and if I say it aint thar, she'll say 'taint thar, too. I wish she was here to hold daddy off. If 'twan't so fur, I'd holler for her anyhow. How she would cling to the old feller's coat-tail!"

Mr Jedediah Suggs let down Bill, and untied him. Approaching Simon, whose coat was off:

"Come, Simon, son," said he, "cross them hands, I'm gwine to correct you."

"It aint no use, daddy," said Simon.

"Why so, Simon?"

"Just bekase it aint. I'm gwine to play cards as long as I live. When I go off to myself, I'm gwine to make my livin' by it. So what's the use of beatin' me about it?"

Old Mr Suggs groaned, as he was wont to do in the pulpit, at this display of Simon's viciousness.

"Simon," said he, "you're a poor ignunt creetur. You don't know nothin', and you've never been no whars. If I was to turn you off, you'd starve in a week."

"I wish you'd try me," said Simon, "and jist see. I'd win more money in a week than you can make in a year. There aint nobody round here kin make seed corn off o' me at cards. I'm rale smart," he added, with great emphasis.

"Simon! Simon! you poor unlettered fool. Don't you know that all card-players and chicken-fighters, and horse-racers go to hell? You crack-brained creatur' you. And don't you know that them that play cards always lose their money, and—"

"Who wins it all then, daddy?" asked Simon.

"Shet your mouth, you imperdent, slack-jaw'd dog. Your daddy's a-tryin' to give you some good advice, and you a-pickin' up his words that way. I know'd a young man once, when I lived in Ogletharp, as went down to Augusty and sold a hundred dollars' worth of cotton for his daddy, and some o' them gambollers got him to drinkin', and the *very first* night he was with 'em they got every cent of his money."

"Th' couldn't get my money in a *week*," said Simon. "Anybody can git these here green fellows' money: them's

the sort I'm a-gwine to watch for, myself. Here's what kin fix the papers jist about as nice as anybody."

"Well, it's no use to argify about the matter," said old Jedediah; "What saith the Scriptur'? 'He that begetteth a fool, doeth it to his sorrow.' Hence, Simon, you're a poor, miserable fool! so, cross your hands!"

"You'd jist as well not, daddy. I tell you I'm gwine to follow playin' cards for a livin', and what's the use o' bangin' a feller about it? I'm as smart as any of 'em, and Bob Smith says them Augusty fellers can't make rent o' me."

The Reverend Mr Suggs had, once in his life, gone to Augusta; an extent of travel which in those days was a little unusual. His consideration among his neighbours was considerably increased by the circumstance, as he had all the benefit of the popular inference, that no man could visit the city of Augusta without acquiring a vast superiority over all his untravellered neighbours, in every department of human knowledge. Mr Suggs, then, very naturally felt ineffably indignant that an individual who had never seen a collection of human habitations larger than a log-house village—an individual, in short, no other or better than Bob Smith—should venture to express an opinion concerning the manners, customs, or anything else appertaining to, or in any wise connected with, the *ultima thule* of back-woods Georgians. There were two propositions which witnessed their own truth to the mind of Mr Suggs—the one was, that a man who had never been at Augusta, could not know anything about that city, or any place or thing else; the other, that one who *had* been there must, of necessity, be not only well informed as to all things connected with the city itself, but perfectly *au fait* upon all subjects whatsoever. It was therefore in a tone of mingled indignation and contempt that he replied to the last remark of Simon.

"Bob Smith says—does he? And who's Bob Smith? Much does Bob Smith know about Augusty! He's been thar, I reckon! Slipped off yarly some mornin' when nobody warn't noticin', and got back afore night! It's *only* a hundred and fifty mile. Oh yes, Bob Smith knows all about it! I don't know nothin' about it! I a'nt never been to Augusty—I couldn't find the road thar I reckon, ha! ha! Bob—Smi—th! The eternal stink! if he was only to see one o' them fine gentlemen in Augusty, with his fine broad-cloth and bell-crown hat, and shoe-boots a-shinin' like silver, he'd take to the woods and kill himself a-runnin'. Bob Smith! that's whar all your devilment comes from, Simon."

"Bob Smith's as good as anybody else, I judge; and a

heap smarter than some. He showed me how to cut Jack," continued Simon, "and that's more than some people can do if they *have* been to Augusty."

"If Bob Smith kin do it," said the old man, "I kin too. I don't know it by that name; but if it's book knowledge or plain sense, and Bob kin do it, it's reasonable to s'pose that old Jed'diah Suggs wcn't be bothered bad. Is it any ways similyar to the rule of three, Simon?"

"Pretty much, daddy, but not adzactly," said Simon, drawing a pack from his pocket to explain. "Now, daddy," he proceeded, "you see these here four cards is what we call Jacks. Well, now, the idee is, if you'll take the pack and mix 'em all up together, I'll take off a passel from top, and the bottom one of them I take off will be one of the Jacks."

"Me to mix em fust?" said Jedediah.

"Yes."

"And you not to see but the back of the top one, when you go to 'cut,' as you call it?"

"Jist so, daddy."

"And the backs all jist as like as kin be?" said the senior Suggs, examining the cards.

"More like nor cow-peas," said Simon.

"It can't be done, Simon," observed the old man, with great solemnity.

"Bob Smith kin do it, and so kin I."

"It's agin nater, Simon! thar a'n't a man in Augusty, nor on the top of the yearth, that kin do it!"

"Daddy," said our hero, "ef you'll bet me—"

"What!" thundered old Mr Suggs, "*bet*, did you say?" and he came down with a *scorer* across Simon's shoulders—"me, Jed'diah Suggs, that's been in the Lord's sarvice these twenty years—*me* bet, you nasty, sassy, triflin', ugly—"

"I didn't go to say that, daddy; that warn't what I ment, adzactly. I ment to say that ef you'd let me off from this here maulin' you owe me, and *give me* 'Bunch' ef I cut Jack, I'd *give you* all this here silver, if I didn't—that's all. To be sure, I allers know'd *you* wouldn't *bet*."

Old Mr Suggs ascertained the exact amount of the silver which his son handed to him, in an old leathern pouch, for inspection. He also, mentally, compared that sum with an imaginary one, the supposed value of a certain Indian pony, called "Bunch," which he had bought for his "old woman's" Sunday riding, and which had sent the old lady into a fence-corner, the first—and only—time she had ever mounted him. As he weighed the pouch of silver in his hand, Mr Suggs also

endeavoured to analyze the character of the transaction proposed by Simon. "It sartinly *can't* be nothin' but *givin'*, no way it kin be twisted," he murmured to himself. "I *know* he can't do it, so there's no resk. What makes bettin'? The resk. It's a one-sided business, and I'll jist let him give me all his money, and that'll put all his wild sportin' notions out of his head."

"Will you stand it, daddy?" asked Simon, by way of waking the old man up. "You mought as well, for the whip-pin' won't do you no good; and as for Bunch, nobody about the plantation won't ride him, but me."

"Simon," replied the old man, "I agree to it. Your old daddy is in a close place about payin' for his land; and this here money—it's jist eleven dollars lacking of twenty-five cents—will help out mightily. But mind, Simon, ef anything's said about this hereafter, remember, you *give* me the money."

"Very well, daddy, and ef the thing works up instid o' down, I s'pose we'll say you give *me* Bunch—eh?"

"You won't never be troubled to tell how you come by Bunch; the thing's agin natur, and can't be done. What old Jed'diah Suggs knows, he knows as good as anybody. Give me them fixaments, Simon."

Our hero handed the cards to his father, who dropping the plough-line with which he had intended to tie Simon's hands, turned his back to that individual, in order to prevent his witnessing the operation of *mixing*. He then sat down, and very leisurely commenced shuffling the cards, making, however, an exceedingly awkward job of it. Restive *kings* and *queens* jumped from his hands, or obstinately refused to slide into the company of the rest of the pack. Occasionally, a sprightly *knave* would insist on *facing* his neighbour; or, pressing his edge against another's, half double himself up, and then skip away. But Elder Jedediah perseveringly continued his attempts to subdue the refractory, while heavy drops burst from his forehead, and ran down his cheeks. All of a sudden, an idea, quick and penetrating as a rifle-ball, seemed to have entered the cranium of the old man. He chuckled audibly. The devil had suggested to Mr Suggs an *impromptu* "stock," which would place the chances of Simon—already sufficiently slim in the old man's opinion—without the range of possibility. Mr Suggs forthwith proceeded to cull out all the *pieter cards*—so as to be certain to include the *jacks*—and place them at the bottom; with the evident intention of keeping Simon's fingers above these when he should cut. Our hero, who was quietly looking over his father's shoulders all the time, did not seem



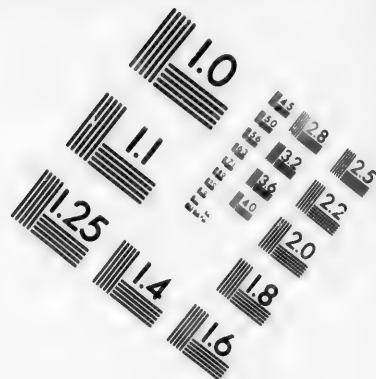
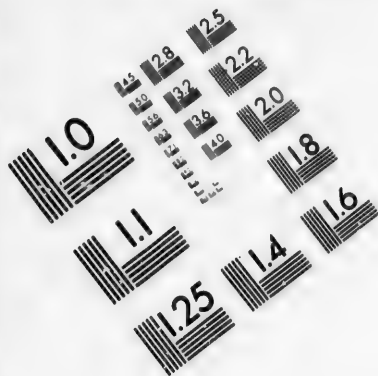
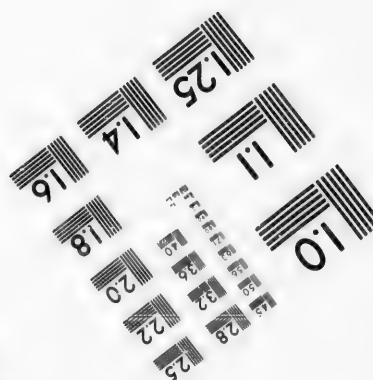
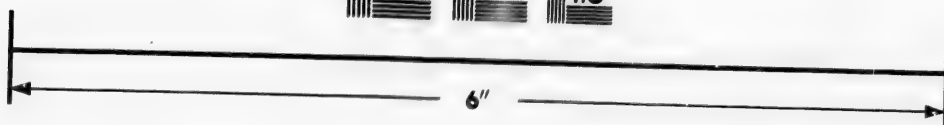
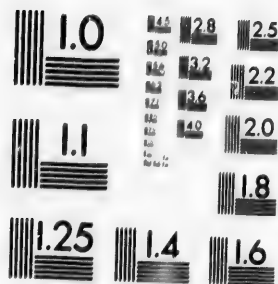


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alarmed by this disposition of the cards; on the contrary, he smiled as if he felt perfectly confident of success, in spite of it.

"Now, daddy," said Simon, when his father had announced himself ready, "narry one of us aint got to look at the cards, while I'm a cuttin'; if we do, it'll spile the conjuration."

"Very well."

"And another thing—you've got to look me right dead in the eye, daddy—will you?"

"To be sure—to be sure," said Mr Suggs; "fire away."

Simon walked up close to his father, and placed his hand on the pack. Old Mr Suggs looked in Simon's eye, and Simon returned the look for about three seconds, during which a close observer might have detected a suspicious working of the wrist of the hand on the cards, but the elder Suggs did not remark it.

"Wake, snakes! day's a breakin'! Rise, Jack!" said Simon, cutting half a dozen cards from the top of the pack, and presenting the face of the bottom one for the inspection of his father.

It was the Jack of Hearts!

Old Mr Suggs staggered back several steps, with uplifted eyes and hands!

"Marciful Master!" he exclaimed, "ef the boy haint! well, how in the round creation of the——! Ben, did you ever! to be sure and sartin, Satan has power on this yearth!" and Mr Suggs groaned in heavy bitterness.

"You never seed nothin' like that in *Augusty*, did ye, daddy?" asked Simon, with a malicious wink at Ben.

"Simon, *how* did you do it?" queried the old man, without noticing his son's question.

"Do it, daddy? Do it? 'Taint nothin'. I done it jest as easy as—shootin'."

Whether this explanation was entirely, or in any degree, satisfactory to the perplexed mind of the Elder Jedediah Suggs, cannot, after the lapse of time which has intervened, be sufficiently ascertained. It is certain, however, that he pressed the investigation no further, but merely requested his son Benjamin to witness the fact that, in consideration of his love and affection for his son Simon, and in order to furnish the donee with the means of leaving that portion of the State of Georgia, he bestowed upon him the impracticable pony, "Bunch."

"Jist so, daddy, jist so; I'll witness that. But it 'minds me mightily of the way mammy *give* old Trailler the side of bacon, last week. She was a sweepin' up the hath—the meat on the table; old Trailler jumps up, gethers the bacon and

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darts; mammy arter him with the broomstick as fur as the door, but seein' the dog has got the start, she shakes the stick at him, and hollers, 'You sassy, aig-sukkin', roguish, gnatty, flopped-eared varmint, take it along, take it along! I only wish 'twas full of a'snic and ox vomit and blue vitruol, so as 'twould cut you' intrils into chitlins!' That's about the way you give Bunch to Simon."

It was evident to our hero that his father intended he should remain but one more night beneath the paternal roof. What mattered it to Simon?

He went home at night, curried and fed Bunch; whispered confidentially in his ear, that he was the "fastest piece of hoss-flesh, accordin' to size, that ever shaded the yearth;" and then busied himself in preparing for an early start on the morrow.

XXXIV.

MY FIRST VISIT TO PORTLAND.

IN the fall of the year 1829, I took it into my head I'd go to Portland. I had heard a good deal about Portland, what a fine place it was, and how the folks got rich there proper fast; and that fall there was a couple of new papers come up to our place from there, called the "Portland Courier," and "Family Reader," and they told a good many queer kind of things, about Portland and one thing another; and all at once it popped into my head, and I up and told father, and sais,

"I am going to Portland whether or no; and I'll see what this world is made of yet."

Father stared a little at first, and said he was afraid I would get lost; but when he see I was bent upon it, he give it up, and he stepped to his chist, and opened the till, and took out a dollar, and gave to me; and says he,

"Jack, this is all I can do for you; but go and lead an honest life, and I believe I shall hear good of you yet."

He turned and walked across the room, but I could see the tears start into his eyes. And mother sat down, and had a hearty crying spell.

This made me feel rather bad for a minit or two, and I almost had a mind to give it up; and then again father's dream came into my mind, and I mustered up courage, and declared

I'd go. So I tacked up the old horse, and packed in a load of axe-handles, and a few notions; and mother fried me some dough-nuts, and put 'em into a box, along with some cheese and sassaes, and ropped me up another shirt, for I told her I didn't know how long I should be gone. And after I got all rigged out, I went round, and bid all the neighbours good-bye, and jumped in, and drove off for Portland.

Aunt Sally had been married two or three years before and moved to Portland; and I inquired round till I found out where she lived, and went there, and put the old horse up, and eat some supper, and went to bed.

And the next morning I got up, and straightened right off to see the editor of the "Portland Courier," for I knew, by what I had seen in his paper, that he was just the man to tell me which way to steer. And when I come to see him, I knew I was right; for soon as I told him my name, and what I wanted, he took me by the hand as kind as if he had been a brother, and says he:

"Mister," says he, "I'll do anything I can to assist you. You have come to a good town; Portland is a healthy, thriving place, and any man with a proper degree of enterprise may do well here. But," says he, "stranger," and he looked mighty kind of knowing, says he, "if you want to make out to your mind, you must do as the steam-boats do."

"Well," says I, "how do they do?" for I didn't know what a steam-boat was any more than the man in the moon.

"Why," says he, "they go ahead. And you must drive about among the folks here, just as tho' you were at home, on the farm among the cattle. Don't be afraid of any of them, but figure away; and, I dare say, you'll get into good business in a very little while. But," says he, "there's one thing you must be careful of; and that is, not to get into the hands of them are folks that trades up round Hucklers' Row, for there's some sharpers up there, if they get hold of you, would twist your eye-teeth out in five minits."

Well, arter he had gin me all the good advice he could, I went back to Aunt Sally's agin, and got some breakfast; and then I walked all over the town, to see what chance I could find to sell my axe-handles, and things, and to get into business.

After I had walked about three or four hours, I come along towards the upper end of the town, where I found there were stores and shops of all sorts and sizes. And I met a feller, and says I,

"What place is this?"

"Why this," says he, "is Hucklers' Row."

"What," says I, "are these the stores where the traders in Hucklers' Row keep?"

And says he, "Yes."

Well then, says I to myself, I have a pesky good mind to go in and have a try with one of these chaps, and see if they can twist my eye-teeth out. If they can get the best end of a bargain out of me, they can do what there ain't a man in our place can do; and I should just like to know what sort of stuff these ere Portland chaps are made of. So in I goes into the best-looking store among 'em. And I see some biscuit lying on the shelf, and says I,

"Mister, how much do you ax a piece for them are biscuits?"

"A cent a piece," says he.

"Well," says I, "shan't give you that, but if you've a mind to I'll give you two cents for three of them, for I begin to feel a little as tho' I would like to take a bite."

"Well," says he, "I wouldn't sell 'em to anybody else so, but seeing it's you, I don't care if you take 'em."

I knew he lied, for he never seen me before in his life. Well, he handed down the biscuits, and I took 'em, and walked round the store a while, to see what else he had to sell. At last, says I,

"Mister, have you got any good cider?"

Says he, "Yes, as good as ever ye see."

"Well," says I, "what do you ax a glass for it?"

"Two cents," says he.

"Well," says I, "seems to me I feel more dry than I do hungry now. Ain't you a mind to take these ere biscuits again and give me a glass of cider?" and says he,

"I don't care if I do."

So he took and laid 'em on the shelf, again and poured out a glass of cider. I took the cider and drinkt it down, and to tell the truth, it was capital good cider. Then says I,

"I guess it's time for me to be agoing," and I stept along towards the door; but says he,

"Stop, Mister, I believe you haven't paid me for the cider."

"Not paid you for the cider!" says I; "what do you mean by that? didn't the biscuits that I give you just come to the cider?"

"Oh, ah, right!" says he.

So I started to go again, and says he,

"But stop, Mister, you didn't pay me for the biscuit."

"What?" says I, "do you mean to impose upon me? do

you think I am going to pay you for the biscuits and let you keep them too? Ain't they there now on your shelf? What more do you want? I guess, Sir, you don't whittle me in that way."

So I turned about and marched off, and left the feller staring and scratching his head as tho' he was struck with a dun-derment.

Howsomever, I didn't want to cheat him, only jest to show 'em it wan't so easy a matter to pull my eye-teeth out; so I called in next day, and paid him two cents. Well, I stayed at Aunt Sally's a week or two, and I went about town every day to see what chance I could find to trade off my axe-handles, or hire out, or find some way or other to begin to seek my fortune.

And I must confess the editor of the "Courier" was about right in calling Portland a pretty good thriving sort of a place; everybody seemed to be as busy as so many bees, and the masts of the vessels stuck up round the wharves as thick as pine-trees in Uncle Joshua's pasture, and the stores and the shops were so thick, it seemed as if there was no end to them. In short, altho' I have been round the world considerable, from that time to this, all the way from Madawaska to Washington, I've never seen any place yet, that I think has any business to grin at Portland.

XXXV.

BILLY WARRICK'S COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

WARRICK IN DISTRESS.

Piney Bottom, in Old North State,
Jinuary this 4, 1844.

MR PORTER,

Sir:—Bein' in grate distrest, I didn't know what to do, till one of the lawyers councelled me to tell you all about it, and git your opinion. You see I are a bin sparkin' over to one of our nabors a cortin' of Miss Barbry Bass, nigh upon these six munse. So t'other nite I puts on my stork that cum up

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so high that I look'd like our Kurnel paradin of the mililitary on Ginral Muster, tryin' to look over old Snap's years—he holds sich a high hed when he knows that he's got on his holdsturs and pistuls and his trowsen and sich like, for he's a mity proud loss. I had on a linun shurt koller starched stif, that cum up monstrus high rite under my years, so that ev'ry time I turn'd my hed it nigh saw'd off my years, and they are so sore that I had to put on some Gray's intment, which draw'd so hard, that if I hadn't wash'd it in sope-suds I *do* bleve it would a draw'd out my branes. I put on my new briches that is new fashon'd and opens down before, and it tuck me nigh a quarter of a houre to batten 'em, and they had straps so tite I could hardly bend my kneas—I had on my new wastecoast and a dicky bussam with ruffles on each side, and my white hat. I had to be perticular nice in spittin' my terbaccer juce, for my stork were so high I had to jerk back my head like you have seed one of them Snapjack bugs. Considerin' my wiskurs hadn't grow'd out long enuff, as I were conceety to think that I look'd middlin' *peart*, and my old nigger 'oman Venus said I look'd nice enuff for a Bryde.

It tuck one bale of good cotting and six bushils of peese to pay for my close. Dod drot it, it went sorter hard; but when I tho't how putty she *did* look last singin' school day,—with her eyes as blue as indiger, and her teath white as milk, and sich long curlin' hare hanging clear down to her belt ribbon, and sich butiful rosy cheeks, and lips as red as a cock Red-burd in snow time, and how she squeased my hand when I gin her a oringe that I gin six cents for—I didn't grudge the price.

Mr Porter—when I got to old Miss Basses bars, jist after nite, sich streaks and cold fits cum over me worse than a feller with the Buck agur, the furst time he goes to shute at a dear. My kneas got to trimblin', and I could hardly holler "get out" to Miss Basses son Siah's dog, old Troup, who didn't know me in my new geer, and cum out like all creashun a barkin' amazin'. Ses I to myself, ses I, what a fool you is—and then I thort what Squire Britt's nigger man, Tony, who went to town last week, told me about a taler there, who sed that jist as soon he got thru a makin' a sute of close for a member of assembly to go to Rawley in, he 'spected to come out a cortin' of Miss Barbry. This sorter raised my dander—for he's shockin' likely, with black wiskurs 'cept he's nock-nead—with his hare all comded to one side like the Chapel Hill boys and lawyers. Then I went in, and after how-dy'ing and shakin' hands, and sorter squeasin' of Barbry's, I sot down. There was old Miss Bass, Barbry and Siah Bass, her brother, a monstrous hand at

possums—old Kurnel Hard, a goin to cort and stopp'd short to rite to old Miss Basses will, with Squire Britt and one of the nabors to witness it all rite and strate. This kinder shock'd me—till Kurnel Hard, a mighty perlite man, sed, ses he:

"Mr Warrick, you are a lookin' oncommon smart."

"Yes," ses I, "Kurnel (a sorter cuttin' my eye at Barbry), middlin' well in body—but in mind—"

"Ah, I see," ses he (cuttin' of my discourse), "I understand that you are"—(Mr Porter, I forget the dixonary words he sed,—but it were that I were in *love*). If you *could* have seed my face and felt it burne, you *would* a tho't that you had the billyous fever; and as for Barbry, now want she red as a turkey-cock's gills—and she gump'd up and said, "Ma'am," and run outer the room, tho' nobody on yearth that I heerd on called her; and then I heerd Polly Cox—drot her pictur!—who is hired to weeve—a sniggrin' at me.

Arter a while, Squire Britt and the nabor went off—and Siah he went a coonin' of it with his dogs, but driv old Troup back, for he's deth on rabbits; and old Miss Bass went out, and Kurnel Hard, arter taken a drink ouden his cheer-box, he got behin' the door and shuck'd himself and got into one of the beds in the fur eend of the room.

Arter a while, old Miss Bass cum back, and sot in the chim-bly corner and tuck off her shoes, and then tuck up her pipe and went to smokin'—the way she rowl'd the smoke out was astonishin'—and ev'ry now and then she struck her head and sorter gron'd like, what it were at I don't know, 'cept she were bothered 'bout her consarns—or thinkin' 'bout her will which she had jist sined. Bimeby Barbry cum back, and sot on a cheer clost by me. She was a workin' of a border that looked mity fine.

Ses I, "Miss Barbry, what is that that you're seamstring so plaguy putty?"

Ses she, "It teent nothin'."

Up hollered old Miss Bass:

"Why," ses she, "Mr Warrick, it's a *nite-cap*, and what on the Lord's yearth young peple now-a-days works, and laces, and befrils nite-caps fur, *I* can't tell—it beets me—bedizinin' out their heads when they're gwain to bed, just as if anybody but their own peple seed 'em; and there's young men with wiskurs on their upper lip; it want so in my day, but young people's got no sense—bless the Lord! oh me—"

"Lord, mammy," ses Barbry, "do hush."

Ses old Miss Bass, "I shaan't — for it's the nat'ral truth."

Miss Barbry then begun a talkin' with me 'bout the fash-

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uns, when I were in town, but old Miss Bass broke in, and ses she,

"Yes, they tells me that the gals in town has injun-rubber things blowed up and ties aroun' there wastes, and makes 'em look bigger bein' than afore — for all the world like an 'oman was sorter in a curous way behind."

Thinks I, what's comin' next—when old Miss Bass, knockin' the ashes outter her pipe, gethered up her shuse and went off. Then Barbry blushed and begun talkin' 'bout the singin' meetin', and kinder teched me up 'bout bein' fond of sparkin' Dicey Loomis—jist to see how I'd take it.

"Well," ses I, "she's 'bout the likeliest gal in this settlement, and I rekon mity nigh the smartest; they tells me she kin spin more cuts in a day, and card her own rolls, and danse harder and longer, and sings more songs outter the Missunary Harmony, than any gal in the country."

You see, Mr Porter, I tho't I'd size her pile.

Ses she, sorter poutin' up and jist tossin' her head, "If them's your sentiments why don't you cort her? For my part, I knows sev'ral young ladies that's jist as smart, and can sing as many songs, and dance as well, and as for her bein' the prettiest, Laws a mersy! sher—you shouldn't judge for me sposin' I was a man!"

I thot I'd come agin, but was sorter feard of runnin' the thing in the groun'. Then I drawd up my cheer a leetle closer, and were jist about to talk to the spot, when I felt choky, and the trimbles tuck me oncommon astonishin'.

Ses Barbry, lookin' rite up in my face, and 'sorter quiv'rin' in her talk, ses she, "Mr Warrick, goodness gracious! *what does* ale you?"

Ses I, hardly abel to talk, "It's that drotted three-day agur I coteh'd last fall a clearin' in the new grounds; I raly bleve it will kill me, but it makes no odds, daddy and mammy is both ded, and I'm the only one of six as is left, and nobody would kear."

Ses she, lookin' rite mournful, and holdin' down her hed, "Billy, *what does* make you talk so? you auter know that there's *one* that would kear and greve too."

Ses I, peartin' up, "I should like to know if it ar an 'oman; for if it's any gal that's 'spectable and creddittable, I could love her like all creashun. Barbry," ses I, takin' of her hand, "ain't I many a time, as I sot by the fire at home, all by my lone self, ain't I considered how if I *did* have a good wife how I could work for her, and do all I could for her, and make her pleasant like and happy, and do ev'rything for her?" Well

Barbry she look'd up to me, and seem'd so mornful and pale, and tears in her sweet eyes, and pretendin' she didn't know I held her hand, that I could not help sayin': "Barbry, if that sumbody that keared was only *you*, I'd die for you, and be burry'd a dozen times."

She trimbl'd, and look'd so pretty, and sed nothin', I couldn't help kissin' her; and seein' she didn't say "quit," I kissed her nigh on seven or eight times; and as old Miss Bass had gone to bed, and Kurnel Hard was a snorin' away, I want perticillar, and I spose I kiss'd her too loud, for jist as I kissed her the last time, out hollered old Miss Bass:

"My lord! Barbry, old Troup is in the milk-pan! I heard him smackin' his lips a lickin' of the milk. Git out, you old varmint!—git out!"

Seein' how the gander hopped, I jumped up, and hollered, "Git out, Troup, you old raskel!" and opened the door to make bleve I let him out.

As for Barbry, she luffed till she was nigh a burstin' a holdin' in, and run out; and I heerd Kurnel Hard's bed a shakin' like he had my three-day agur. Well, I took tother bed, after havin' to pull my britches over my shuse, for I couldn't unbutton my straps.

Next mornin' I got up airy, and Siah axed me to stay to breakfast, but I had to feed an old cow at the free pastur, and left. Jist as I got to the bars, I meets old Miss Bass, and ses she, "Mr Warrick, next time you see a dog a lickin' up milk, don't let him do it loud enuff to wake up ev'rybody in the house—perticelar when there's a stranger 'bout."

And Barbry sent me word that she's so shamed that she never kin look me in the face agin, and never to come no more.

Mr Porter, what shall I do? I feel uncommon sorry and distrest. Do write me. I seed a letter from N. P. Willis tother day in the Nashunal Intelligensur where he sed he had a hedake on the top of his pen; I've got it at both eends, for my hands is cramp'd a writin', and my hart akes. Do write me what to do.

No more at pressence, but remane

WM. WARRICK.

CHAPTER II.

WARRICK IN LUCK.

"I'd orfen heerd it said ob late,
Dat Norf Carolina was de state
Whar han'some boys am bound to shine,
Like Dandy Jim of de Caroline," &c.

Piney Bottom, in Old North State,
March 21, this 1844.

MR PORTER,

I rode three mile evry Satterdy to git a letter outer the Post Offis, spectin' as how you had writ me a anser; but I spose what with Pineter dogs, and hosses, and Kricket, and Boxin', and Texas, Trebla, and three Fannys, and Acorns, and Punch in perticlar, you hain't had no time. I'm glad your *Speerit* is revivin'; so is mine, and, as the boy sed to his mammy, I hopes to be better acquainted with you.

Well, I got so sick in my speerits and droopy like, that I thot I should ev died stone ded, not seein' of Barbry for three weeks. So one evenin' I went down, spectin' as how old Miss Bass had gone to Sociashun—for she's mity religus, and grones shockin' at prayers—to hear two prechers from the Sanwitch Ilans, where they tell me the peple all goes naked—which is comikil, as factry homespun is cheap, and could afford to kiver themselves at nine cent a yard.

When I went in, there sot old Miss Bass and old Miss Collis a-smokin' and chattin' amazin'. I *do* think old Miss Collis beats all natur at smokin'.

Old Miss Collis had on her Sundy frock, and had it draw'd up over her kneas to keep from skorchin', and her pettykoats rased tolerble high as she sot over the fire to be more comfortable like, but when she seed me she drop'd 'em down, and arter howd'ying and civerlizin' each other, I sot down, but being sorter flusticated like, thinkin' of that skrape, last time I was here, about old Troup lickin' of the milk, I didn't notis perticlar where I sot. So I sot down in a cheer where Barbry had throw'd down her work (when she seed me comin' at the bars) and run—and her nedle stuck shockin' in my—into *me*, and made me jump up oncommon and hollered!

I thought old Miss Collis woulder split wide open a laffin',

and old Miss Bass like to a busted, and axed my parding for laffin', and I had to give in, but it was laffin' on t'other side, and had to rub the place.

Arter awhile we got done—but it looked like I had bad luck, for in sittin' down agin I lik'd to have sot on Barbry's tom cat, which if I had, I shoullder bin like Kurnei Zip Coon's wife, who jump'd into a holler log to mash two young panthers to deth, and they scratched her so bad she couldn't set down for two munse! I aseed this 'ere in a almynack. Old Miss Bass, seein' I was bothered, axed me to have a dram, but I thank'd her, no.

Ses she, "Mr Warrick, you ain't one of the Temprite Siety?"

Ses I, "No, but I hain't got no 'casion at presence!"

Ses she, "You is welcome."

Well, we chatted on some time 'bout prechin, and mumps, and the measly oitment, and Tyler gripes, and Miss Collis she broke out and sed:

"I never *did* hear the beat of them Tyler gripes! I have hearn talk of all sorter gripes, and dry gripes, and always thought that the gripes was in the stomic, before now, but bless your soul, Miss Bass, this here gripes is in the hed! I told my old man that no good would come of 'lectin' Tyler, but poor old creeter, he's sorter hard-headed, and got childish, and would do it. O! me? well, we're all got to come to it and leve this world! Bless the Lord! I hope I'm ready!"

"That's a fact," ses old Miss Bass, "you're right, Miss Collis; old men gits uncommon stubborn; a hard, mighty hard time I had with my old man. But he's ded and gone! I hope he's happy!"

And they both groaned and shet their eyes, and pucked up their mouths.

Ses she, "He got mity rumitys and troubled me powerful, and the old creetur tuck astonishin' of dokter's stuff, and aleck-campane and rose of sublimit—but he went at last! The Lord's will be done!—*Skat!* you stinkin' hussy, and come out of that kibbard!" ses she to the cat: "I *do* think cats is abominable, and that tom cat of Barbry's is the 'scheviousest cat I ever *did* see!"

Ses Miss Collis, "Cats *is* a pest, but a body can't do well without 'em; the mice would take the house bodily," ses she. "Miss Bass, they tell me that Dicey Loomis is a-gwyng to be married—her peple was in town last week, and bort a power of things and artyfishals, and lofe sugar, and ribbuns, and cheese, and sich like!"

"Why," ses Miss Bass, "you don't tell me so! Did I ever hear the beat o' that! Miss Collis, are it a fact?"

"Yes," ses Miss Collis, "it's the nat'ral truth, for 't'other Bounds tell'd it to me at last class meetin'."

Ses Miss Bass, hollerin' to Barbry in t'other room: "Barbry, do you hear that Dicey Loomis is gwyne to git married? Well! well! it beats me! bless the Lord! I wonder who she's gwyne to get married to, Miss Collis?"

Ses Miss Collis, "Now, child, yare too hard for me! but they do say it's to that Taler from Town. Well, he's a putty man, and had on such a nice dress—'cept he's most too much nock-nead, *sick* eyes and *sick* whiskers, and now *don't* he play the fiddle?"

Ses Miss Bass, "Well, Dicey is a middlin' peart gal, but for my part I don't see what the taler seed in *her*."

"Nor I nuther," ses Miss Collis, "but she's gwine to do well. I couldn't a sed no if he'd a axed for our Polly."

Then in comes Barbry, and we how-ly'd and both turned sorter red in the face, and I trimbl'd tolerable and felt agurry. Well, arter we talk'd a spell, all of us, Miss Bass got up and ses she,

"Miss Collis I want to show you a nice passel of chickens; our old speckled hen come off with eleven, yisterdy, as nice as ever you *did* see."

Then old Miss Collis riz up, and puttin' her hands on her hips, and stratened like, and ses, right quick,

"Laws a massy! my poor back! Drat the rumatics! It's powerful bad; it's gwyne to rain, I know! oh, me! me!"—and they both went out.

Then Barbry look'd at me so comikil and sed,

"Billy, I raly *shall* die thinkin' of you and old Troup!" and she throw'd herself back and laffed and laffed; and she looked so putty and so happy, ses I to myself,

"Billy Warriek, you must marry that gal and no mistake, or brake a trace!" and I swore to it.

Well, we then talk'd agreeable like, and sorter saft, and both of us war so glad to see one another till old Miss Bass and Miss Collis come back; and bimeby Miss Collis youngest son come for her, and I helped her at the bars to get up behin' her son, and ses she,

"Good-bye, Billy! Good luck to you! I know'd your daddy and mammy afore you was born on yerth, and I was the fust one after your granny that had you in the arms—me and Miss Bass *talk'd it over!* you'll git a smart, peart, likely gal! So good-bye, Billy."

Ses I, "Good-bye, Miss Collis," and ses I, "Gooly, take good kear of your mammy, my son!"

You see I thot I'd be perlite.

Well, when I went back, there sot old Miss Bass, and ses she,

"Billy, Miss Collis and me is a bin talkin' over you and Barbry, and seein' you are a good karickter and smart, and well to do in the world, and a poor orphin boy, I shan't say *no!* Take her, Billy, and be good to her, and God bless you, my son, for I'm all the mammy you've got," so she kiss'd me, and ses she, "now kiss Barbry. We've talk'd it over, and leave us for a spell, for it's hard to give up my child."

So I kissed Barbry, and left.

The way I rode home was oncommon peart, and my old mare pranced and was like the man in Skriptur, who "waxed fat and kick'd," and I hurried home to tell old Venus, and to put up three shotes and some turkies to fatten for the innfare. Mr Porter, it's to be third Wensday in next month, and Barbry sends you a ticket, hopin' you will put it in your paper—that is, the weddin'.

So wishin' you a heap of subskribers, I remane in good helth and speerits at presence,

Your Friend,

WM. WARRICK.

CHAPTER III.

WARRICK'S WEDDING.

Described in a letter by an "old flame" of his.

Piney Bottom, this July 9, of 1844.

MISS POLLY STROUD,

Dear Maddam.—I now take my pen in hand of the presence oppertunity to let you know how we are all well, but I am purry in spirits hopin' this few lines may find you the same by gods mercy as I have been so mortfyde I could cry my eyes out bodily. Bill Warrick, yes Bill Warrick, is married to Barbry Bass! I seed it done—a mean, triffin', deæevinist creetur—but never mind—Didn't I know him when we went to old field skool—a little raggid orfin Boy, with nobody to patch his close torn behin, a makin of a dicky-dicky-dout of

himself—cause his old nigger 'oman Venus was too lazy to mend 'em? Didn't I know him when he couldn't make a pot hook or a hanger in his copy book to save his life, as for makin' of a S he always put it tother way, jist so, S backwards. And then to say I were too old for him, and that he always conceited I was a sort of a sister to him! O Polly Stroud, he is so likely, perticular when he is dressed up of a Sunday or a frolick—and what is worser his wife is prutty too, tho' I don't acknowlige it here. Only too think how I doated on him, how I used to save bcsim blossoms for him, which some people call sweet sentid shrubs—and how I used to put my hand in an pull them out for him, and how I used to blush when he sed they was sweeter for comin' from where they did? Who went blackberryin' and huckleberryin' with me? who always rode to preechun with me and helped me on the hos? who made Pokebry stains in dimons and squares and circles and harts and so on at quiltins for me?—and talkin' of Poke—I do hope to fathers above that Poke will beat Clay jist to spite Bill, for he is a rank distracted Whig and secreterry to the Clay Club—who always threaded my nedle and has kissed me in perticler, in playin' of kneelin' to the wittyst, bowin' to the puttyist, and kissin' of them you love best, and play in Sister Feebe, and Oats, Peas-Beans and Barley grows—at least one hundred times? Who wated as candil holder with me at Tim Bolins weddin', and sed he knowd one in the room hed heap rather marry, and looked at me so oncommon, and his eyes so blue that I felt my face burn for a quarter of a hour? who I do say was it but Bill Warrick?—yes, and a heap more! If I haven't a grate mind to sue him, and would do it, if it wasn't I am feared hed show a Voluntine I writ to him Feberary a year ago. He orter be exposed, for if ever he is a widderer, he'll fool somebody else the same way he did me. It's a burnin' shame, I could hardly hold my head up at the weddin'. If I hadnt of bin so mad and too proud to let him see it I could cried severe.

Well, it was a nice weddin'; sich ice-cakes and minicles, and raisins, and oringis and hams, flour doins and chickin fixins, and four oncommon fattest big goblers rosted I ever seed.

The Bryde was dressed in a white muslin figgured over a pink satin pettycote, with white gloves and satin shoes, and her hair a curlin' down with a little rose in it, and a chain aroun her neck. I don't know whether it was raal gool or plated. She looked butiful, and Bill did look nice, and all the candydates and two preechers and Col. Hard was there, and Bills niggers, the likeliest nine of them you ever looked at, and

when I did look at em and think, I raly thought I should or broke my heart.

Well, sich kissin'—several of the gals sed that there faces burnt like fire, for one of the preachers and Col. Hard wosn't shaved clost.

Bimeby I was a sittin' leanin' back, and Bill he come behin me and sorter jerked me back, and skeared me powerful for fear I was fallin' backwards, and I skreamed and kicked up my feet before to ketch like, and if I hadn't a had on pantalets I reckon somebody would of knowd whether I gartered above my knees or not. We had a right good laff on old Parson Brown as he got through a marryin' of em—says he:

"I pronounce you, William Warrick and Barbry Bass, man and 'oman,"—he did look so when we laffed, and he rite quick sed—"man and wife—salute your Bryde," and Bill looked horrid red, and Barbry trimbled and blushed astonishin' severe.

Well, it's all over, but I don't keer—there's as good fish in the sea as ever come outen it. I'm not poor for the likes of Bill Warrick, havin' now three sparks, and one of them from Town, whose got a good grocery and leads the Quire at church, outer the Suthern Harmony, the Missonry Harmony is gone outer fashion.

Uncle Ben's oldest gal Suky is gwine to marry a Virginny tobacker roler, named Saint George Drummon, and he says he is a kin to Jack Randolph and Pokerhuntas, who they is the Lord knows. Our Jack got his finger cut with a steal trap catchin' of a koon for a Clay Club, and the boys is down on a tar raft, and ole Miss Collis and mammy is powerful rumatic, and the measly complaint is amazin! I jist heard you have got two twins agin—that limestone water must be astonishin' curyous.

What is the fashuns in Tennysee, the biggest sort of Bishups is the go here. My love to your old man,

Your friend,

NANCY GUITON.

To Miss Polly Stroud,

Nigh Noxvil in the State of Tennysee,

Close by where the French Broad and Holsin jines.

Old Miss Collis and mammy is jist come home. Betsy Bolin is jist had a fine son and they say she is a doin' as well as could be expected, and the huckleberry crop is short on account of the drouth.

XXXVI.

OUR TOWN.

I SPENT a summer in the Eastern States, for the purpose of studying Yankee character, and picking up such peculiarities of dialect and expression as I could, from constant communication with the "critters" themselves. In Boston, I was thus invited by a countryman to visit the town in which he lived.

"Wal, stranger, can't you come down our way, and give us a show?"

"Where do you live?" inquired I.

"Oh, abeout half way between this ere and sunrise."

"Oh, yes," said I, adopting at once the style of the countryman, "I know; where the trees grow under-ground, and galls weigh two hundred pounds. Where some on 'em are so fat, they grease the cart-wheels with their shadow, and some on 'em so thin, you're obliged to look at 'em twice afore you can see 'em at all."

"Wal, I guess you've been there," says he, saying which, the countryman departed.

XXXVII.

"FALLING OFF A LOG," IN A GAME OF "SEVEN UP."

"Hoss and hoss!"

"Yes; 'hoss and hoss,' and my deal!"

"I'll double the bet and have the whole bottle or none."

"Let me cut, and I'll stand it."

"S'pose we both take a *little* drink first," said Chunkey.

"No: darned if I do! thar ain't enough for us both — if I win I'll drink it, and you must wait till a boat comes, if you die! If you win, I'll wait, if I die!"

Such was the conversation between Jim and Chunkey, as they were sitting across a log on the banks of the Yazoo River, surrounded by a cloud of mosquitoes, playing "seven-up" for a remaining bottle of whisky, which was not enough for the two, and "wouldn't set one forward" *much*. They were just return-

ing from Bear Creek, in Township 17, Range 1, where they had some hands deadening timber, preparatory to opening a plantation in the Fall. They had sent the negroes to the river to take a steamboat, whilst they, with their furniture, and the remains of a forty-two gallon "red-head," came down Deer Creek in a day, out into False Lake, through False Lake into Wasp Lake, and down that to where it empties into the Yazoo, and here on the banks of that river our scene opens.

"Go ahead, then," said Chunkey, "shuffle, deal, and win, if you can, but take out that Jack what's torn!"

I took the Jack out, shuffled, dealt, and at it we went. Chunkey looked mighty scared; his eye was sorter oneasy, and dartin' about, and he seemed to be choked as he kept tryin' to swaller somethin'—the long beard on his face looked powerful black, or else his face looked powerful white, one or the 'yether. We both played mighty slow and careful. The first hand I made "high, low," and Chunkey "game;" the second hand I made "low, Jack," and Chunkey "high, game."

"Four to three," says I.

"Yes, and my deal," said Chunkey.

He gin 'em the Sunflower "shuffle," and I the Big Greasy "cut," and pushed 'em back. Chunkey dealt 'em mighty slow, and kept tryin' to see my cards, but I laid my hand on 'em as fast as they fell on the log, to prevent him from seein' the marks. He turned up the Ace of Clubs. When I looked at my hand, thar was the King, Jack, Nine, and Deuce,—I led my King—

"High!" says I.

"Low!" said Chunkey, poppin' down the Tray.

"Not edzactly," said I, hawlin' in the trick, and leadin' the Deuce, and jist as I done so, I seed Chunkey starin' over my shoulder, lookin' wilder nor a dyin' bar. I never seed a man look so awful in my life. I thought he were gwine to have a fit.

"Ya, ya!" said he, "fallin' off the log," cryin' "*Snake! snake!*"

I never took time to look, but made a big he-spring about twenty feet in the cane, the har on my head standin' stiff as bristles and ratlin' like a raftsmen's bones, with the Sky lake ager, and the bad feelins runnin' down to my toes. I reckon you never seed a man so frightened of snakes as I is, and I've been so all my life; I'd rather fight the biggest bar in the swamp with his own weapons, teeth and claws, takin it rough and tumble, dependin' on my mind and knowledge of a bar's character, than come in contact with a big rusty highland mo-

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cassin or rattlesnake, and that's the reason I never hunts in the summer-time. When I lived up on Deer Creek, thar was a perfect cord of all sorts, and I used to wear all summer the thickest kind of cow-hide boots, reachin' up to my hips, and I *never* went into the field, 'ceptin on a mule, with a double-barrelled gun at that. This, Chunkey knowed; and whenever he seed one he gin me warnin'. Chunkey ain't afraid of snakes; he'd jist as soon eat of a gourd with a snake as not, if the snake would help himself and not meddle with his lick.

Well, arter lookin' about a spell I couldn't see no snake-sign, and I then hollered to Chunkey, but darned a word did he say. It then flashed across my mind that as Chunkey fell on the side of the log whar the lick lay, he *might* sorter taste it, as he were dry enough to be able to swaller a little at a time; so I struck a lick back to the log and looked over, and thar he lay, jist curled up like a 'coon in the sunshine, *and the bottle jist glued to his lips*, and the lick runnin' down his throat like a storm! darn him, I hadden't no time to think afore I bounced at him! I struck across his snout, and he nailed my thumb in his jaws, and rostled up a handful of dirt and throwed it in my eyes, and that sot me to gwine, and I throwed the licks into him right and left, and I made the fur fly, *I tell you*; but Chunkey stood it like a man! Darned the word did he say; he wouldn't holler, he was *perfectly game*!

"No, that's a fact! I didn't holler; I didn't have time; while you were working away on that gum-knot, I were standin' up agin a little dog-wood finishin' the lick!"

"How comes it that you never wrung in that part of the story about the knot before!"

"'Cause, I'd done got the lick, and I was satisfied; you thought you'd gin me some mighty big licks, and you was satisfied; and it would have been mean in me to crow over you then: you was out of lick, tobacco, and had your fist all skinned and beat as soft as a bar's foot! Oh no, Jim, I'm reasonable, *I is*."

"Well, *go along*; if I don't set you to gnawin' somethin' harder than that knot afore long, then my name ain't nothin' to me, and I don't car for nobody, that's all."

"All sot," says Chunkey, "let's lick. You wanted to know what '*fallin' off a log*' meant, and I thought I'd show you; but, my honey, I'll jist let you know if you'd a hit *me* any of them licks what you struck 'right and left' into that knot, I'd a gin you a touch of panter fisticuffs—a sort of cross of the scratch on the bite—and a powerful strong game it is, in a close

fight. Come, gents, let's licker, and then I can beat any man that wars har, for a mighty nice chunk of a poney, at any game of short cards :

Oh, the waggoner was a mighty man, a mighty man was he :
He'd pop his whip, and stretch his chains, and holler ' wo, gee ! ' "

XXXVIII.

A YANKEY CARD-TABLE.

WHEN I was about leaving New Orleans, standing upon the Levee, waiting for my luggage, I was thus addressed by a long, lean, down-Easter :

" Say yeou, which of these things slips up fust ? "

" What ? " said I.

" Which of these things slips up fust ? "

" Do you mean which steamboat goes up the river first ? "

" Yes, I'll be darned if I don't. "

" That one, " said I, pointing to the nearest.

" I'm in an awful hurry to git eout of this. It is so thundering hot, and I smell the yellor fever all reound. "

This individual had a very intellectual forehead, measuring about an inch and a quarter in height, and punched in at the sides to match. His eyes were set deep in their sockets, and something like a pig's, only the colour was not as good. His nose pushed boldly out, as it started from the lower part of his forehead, as though it meant to be something, but when it had reached half its destination, it bent suddenly in like a parrot's beak. His upper lip was long and thin, and was stretched on a sort of rack, which was made by a couple of supernumerary teeth, which stuck out very prominently. His chin, too modest to attempt a rivalry with his projecting lip, receded backwards towards the throat, so that, to look at him in front, you did not perceive that he had any chin at all. His hair was very light and bristly. A snuff-coloured coat of domestic manufacture adorned the upper part of his person. It was an ancient affair. The velvet was worn from the collar in several places, but which was carefully patched with red flannel, being the nearest approach to the original colour of the collar that could be found in his domestic menagerie of reserved rags. The buttons, which one would naturally look for at the bottom of the waist, had wandered up between his shoulders. The coat was remarkably

long, extending from high up on the shoulders to the lower part of the calves of his legs. He was slightly round-shouldered, so that when he stood right up, a small lady might have found shelter in a rain storm in the vacancy left between the coat and the back. His pants, to common observers, would have been called too short, but he denied this, averring that his legs were too long for his trowsers. On his arm hung an old-fashioned camlet cloak, with the lining of green baize hanging about a quarter of a yard below the edge of the camlet. He said this was no fault of the lining, anyhow; "it got wet, and t'other shrunk a leetle, but the lining stuck to it like blazes." The Yankee was exceedingly anxious to secure his passage by the first boat, and he sang out to some person:

"Say, yeou, where is the Captain of this consarn. Say, yeou, (to some one else,) I want the Captain. Look here, Nigger, show a feller the Captain. Look here, you black sarpint, don't stick out your lips at me. Wal, I swow, I'll give anybody three cents that will show me the Captain."

The Captain, hearing the noise, stepped forward, and told the Yankee if he wished to see the Captain, he was commander of the boat.

"Dew tell? Wal, I swan, you have got a kind of commanding way about you, that's a fact."

"What do you wish?" said the Captain."

"Wal, I want a bathe."

"Very well, jump into the river, there is plenty of water."

"I tell you, I want a bathe."

"Well, don't I tell you to jump in, you can swim across if you like; we shall not start just yet."

"I want a bathe to lie down in. Now do you know what I mean, darn you?"

"Oh, you want a berth?"

"Wal, darn you, didn't I say bathe? I know what I'm about, I guess."

"I will accommodate you as far as I can," said the Captain, "but I've nothing but a mattress to offer, and that is upon the cabin floor."

"Dew tell."

"It is the only one that is vacant, and the cabin floor is covered with them, so you had better secure it at once."

"Wal, then, I guess I'd better turn right in."

I omitted to mention that he carried a valise in his hand. Some one rather impertinently asked him what he had in it.

"Wal," said he, "I don't know that it's any of your business, but I don't mind telling on you. There is two shirts, one clean,

t'other dirty; a pair of pants about as good as new, only a leetle worn here and there, and a pair of pistols. D'y'e want I should take 'em out and show you?"

When he went down to turn in, he put the valise under his head, wrapped his old cloak around him, and threw himself, as he said, "into the arms of omnibus." The mattresses on the other side of him were occupied by some rough Kentucky boatmen. In the middle of the night these men got up and commenced playing cards. No table being handy, they made use of the back of our Yankee friend for one, and chalked the reckoning of the game upon the camlet cloak, which surrounded the body of the unconscious sleeper. They became interested in the game, and began to lay down their cards with a might of fist and earnestness of manner which soon roused up our sleeping friend. He attempted to rise, but was held down by one of the party, who exclaimed:

"Lie still, stranger, I've only got three to go, and I hold the Jack."

"Never mind, I'm a most smothered here, but go ahead, darn you, play quick and I'll go you halves."

He accordingly lay still until they had finished their game, but whether the Kentucky gambler divided his gains with his table, was never satisfactorily ascertained.

XXXIX.

DICK M'COY'S SKETCHES OF HIS NEIGHBOURS.

LAST summer I determined to visit the battle-ground of the *Horse-Shoe*, to see if any vestiges remained of *Old Hickory's* great fight with the Indians of the Tallapoosa. Fond of all sorts of aquatic diversion, I concluded to take the river four or five miles above, and descend to the "Shoe," and I therefore employed an old crony of mine, Dick M'Coy, to take me down in a canoe. Dick lives on the bank, and has all the qualifications of an otter, for river explorations.

For some miles above the battle-ground the river is a succession of shallows, broken every mile or two by lovely patches of smooth, still water, generally bedecked with a green islet or two, around which the trout love to play. The banks are generally large, irregular hills, that look as if they were struggling to pitch themselves, with their huge pines, into the

stream; but once in a while you find a level strip of alluvial in cultivation, or a beautiful and fertile declivity, shaded by magnificent poplars, beech-trees, and walnut. Now and then you may see the cabin of a squatter, stuck to the side of a hill, like a fungus against a wall; but, generally, the Tallapoosa retains the wild, pristine features of the days when the Creek hunted on its banks, or disported himself upon its waters. A little way out from the river, on either side, among the "hollows" formed by little creeks and smaller streams, live a people, half-agricultural, half-piscatorial—a sinewy, yellow-headed, whiskey-loving set. Those south of the river, are the inhabitants of "'Possum Trot," while those on the north are the citizens of "Turpentine." Dick M'Coy is a 'Possum-Trotter, a fishing fellow, fishy in his stories, but always *au fait* in regard to matters of settlement gossip.

Seated on a clap-board, a little aft of the centre of the boat, and facing Dick, I was amused for several hours with his conversation, as we threaded the intricate passages of the shoals, now whizzing by and barely touching an ugly rock, now spinning round in a little whirlpool, like a tee-totum. The skill of my Palinurus, however, seemed equal to any emergency; and we alternately twisted and tumbled along, at the rate of two miles and a half an hour.

As we came into a small, deep sheet of water, Dick pointed with his paddle to a smoke issuing from among the trees, on the "Turpentine" side of the river, and remarked:

"Thar's whar our *lazy* man lives—Seaborn Brown."

"Ah! is he lazy much?"

"Powerful."

"As how?"

"Onct he went out huntin', and he was so lazy he 'cluded he wouldn't. So he laid down in the sand, close to the aidge of the water. It come on to rain like the devil, and I seen him from t'other side, tho't he was asleep, and hollered to him."

"Ses I, 'it's rainin' like wrath, Seab, and why don't you git up?"

"Ses he, hollerin' back, 'I'm wet anyhow, and thar's no use."

"After a little, the river begun to rise about five foot an hour, and I hollers to him agin."

"Ses I, 'Seaborn, the river's a-risin' on to your gun; the but's half way in the water now."

"Ses he, hollerin' back, 'The water ain't gwine to hurt the wood part."

"I waited a few minutes, and sung out:

"'Scaborn, you're half under water yourself, and your gun-lock is in the river!'

"Ses he, 'I never ketches cold, and thar's no load in the gun, and besides, she needs a washin' out.'

"And, Squire," continued Dick, "the last I seen of him that day, he tuck a flask out of his pocket, *as he lay*, drinkt, ketcht some water in the flask, and drinkt again, *as he lay*; and then throw'd his face back, this way, like, to keep the river out of his mouth and nose! "

Amused at Dick's anecdote of his lazy neighbour, I solicited some information about the occupant of a cabin nearly in the water, on the 'Possum Trot side.

At the very door of the dwelling commenced a fish-trap dam; and on the trap stood a stalwart fellow in a red flannel shirt, and pantaloons that were merely breeches—the legs being torn off entirely.

"Who's that?" I asked.

"Wait till we pass him, and I'll tell you."

We tumbled onward a few yards.

"That's Jim Ed'ards; he loves cat-fish some! Well, he does! Don't do nothin' but ketch 'em. Some of the boys says he's got slimy all over, *like* unto a cat—don't know about that; all I know is, we ketcht one in the seine, that weighed over forty pounds. Thar was a *mocassin* tuk out of it longer than my arm. And nobody wouldn't have it then, but Jim. As we was goin' home, Jim a totin' the fish—ses I, 'Jim, you ain't a gwine to eat *that* cat, surely!'

"Ses he, 'Pshaw! that mocassin warn't nothin'."

"Ses I, 'Jim, enny man that'll eat a cat, would eat a bull-frog.'

"And with that, he knocked me down and liked to a killed me: and that was the reason I didn't want to tell you about him twell we'd passed him."

As we neared a pretty little island, on which were a house and two or three acres in cultivation:

"Thar," said Dick, "is Dock Norris's settlement. I guess he wont '*play horse*' agin in a hurry. He claims 'Possum Trot for his beat, but we'd all rather he'd take Turpington."

"What game was that he played?" I asked.

"Oh! playin' horse. See, thar was a crowd of boys come down and kamped on Turpington side, to seine. They was but a little ways from the river—leastways thar camp fire was—and between the river and it, is a pretty knoll, whar the river's left a pretty bed of white sand as big as a garden spot,

and right at it the water's ten foot deep, and it's about the same from the top of the bluff to the water.

"A big, one-eyed fellow named Ben Baker, was at the head of the town crowd, and as soon as they'd struck a camp, Ben and his fellers, except one (a lad like), tuck the seine and went away down the river, fishin', and was gone a'most all day. Well, Dock bein' of a sharp, splinter-legged, mink-face feller, gits some of his boys, and goes over in the time, and they drinks all Ben's whiskey and most all his coffee, and eats up all his bacon meat—sides bein' sassy to the boy. Arter a while here comes Ben and his kump'ny back, wet and tired, and hungry. The boy told 'em Dock Norris and his crowd had eat and drunk up everything, and Ben's one eye shined like the ev'n'ing star.

"Whar's he?" axed Ben; and then he turned round and seed Dock and his boys, on thar all-fours squealin' and rearin', *playin' horse*, they called it, in that pretty sandy place. Ben went right in amongst 'em, and ses he, 'I'll play horse, too,' and then he came down to his all-fours, and here they had it, round and round, rearin', pitchin', and cavortin'! Dock was might'y pleased that Ben didn't seem mad; but bime-by, Ben got him close to the bank, and then, in a minute, gethered him by the seat of his breeches and the har of the head and slung him twenty foot out in the current. About the time Dock ris, Ben had another of the crowd harnessed, and he throw'd *him* at Dock! Then he pitched another, and so on, twell he'd thrown 'em all in. You oughter 'a seen 'em swim to the shoals and take that bee-line for home!"

"Why didn't they turn on him and thrash him?" I asked.

"Oh, you see he was a great big fellow, weighed two hundred, and was as strong as a yoke of oxen; and you know, 'squire, most of the people is mighty *puny-like*, in the *Trot*. Well, *playin' horse* got broke up after that."

When the next clearing came into view, I inquired of Mc'Coy, whose it was.

"*Don't* you know, 'squire? Ain't you never *seen* him? Why, it's old Bill Wallis's place, and he's *our ugly man*! The whole livin' breathin' yeth ain't got the match to his pieter! His mouth is split every way, and turned wrong-side out, and when he opens it, it's like spreadin' an otter trap to set it. The skin's constant a pealing' from his nose, and his eyes looks like they was just stuck on to his face with pins! He's got hardly any skin to shet his eyes with, and not a sign of *har* to that little! His years is like a wolf's, and his tongue's a'most allers hangin' out of his mouth! His whole face looks like it

was half-roasted! Why, he's obleeged to stay 'bout home; the nabor women is afraid their babies 'ill be like him!"

Just after this last story we reached a fall of two feet, over which Dick's plan was to descend bow-foremost, with a "ca-souse," as he expressed it. But we ran upon a rock, the current swayed us round, and over we went, broad-side.

"This is an ugly scrape, Dick," said I, as soon as we got ashore.

"Yes, 'squire, but not so ugly as old Wallis; thar's nuthin but death can eekal him. Howsever, less leave bailin' the boat twell mornin', and go and stay with old Billy to-night, and then you'll see for yourself."

So, instead of sleeping at the Horse-shoe, we spent the night with old Billy and his folks; and we had a rare time there I assure you.

XL.

KICKING A YANKEE.

A VERY handsome friend of ours, who a few weeks ago was *poked* out of a comfortable office up the river, has betaken himself to Bangor, for a time, to recover from the wound inflicted upon his feelings by our "unprincipled and immolating administration."

Change of air must have had an instantaneous effect upon his spirits; for, from Galena, he writes us an amusing letter, which, among other things, tells us of a desperate quarrel that took place on board of the boat between a real live dandy tourist, and a real live Yankee settler. The latter trod on the toes of the former; whereupon the former threatened to "Kick out of the cabin" the latter.

"You'll kick me out of this cabing?"

"Yes, Sir, I'll kick you out of this cabin!"

"You'll kick *me*, Mr *Hitchcock*, out of this cabing?"

"Yes, Sir, I'll kick *you*, Mr Hitchcock!"

"Wal, I guess," said the Yankee, very coolly, after being perfectly satisfied that it was himself who stood in such imminent peril of assault—"I guess, since you talk of kicking, you've never heard me tell about old Bradley and my mare, there, to hum?"

"No, Sir, nor do I wish—"

"Wal, guess it won't set you back much, anyhow, as kicking's generally best to be considered on. You see old Bradley is one of these sanctimonious, long-faced hypocrites, who put on a religious suit every Sabbath morning, and with a good deal of screwing, manage to keep it on till after sermon in the afternoon; and as I was a Universalist, he allers picked me out as a subject for religious conversation—and the darned hypocrite would talk about sacred things, without ever winking. Wal, he had an old roan mare that would jump over any fourteen-rail fence in Illinois, and open any door in my barn that hadn't a padlock on it. Tu or three times I found her in my stable, and I told Bradley about it, and he was 'very sorry'—'an unruly animal'—'would watch her,' and a hull lot of such things, all said in a very serious manner, with a face twice as long as Deacon Farrar's on Fast day. I knew all the time he was lying, and so I watched him and his old roan tu; and for three nights regular, old roan came to my stable about bed time, and just at daylight Bradley would come, bridle her, and ride off. I then just took my old mare down to a blacksmith's shop, and had some shoes made with 'corks' about four inches long, and had 'em nailed on to her hind feet. Your heels mister, ain't nothing to 'em. I took her home, give her about ten feet halter, and tied her right in the centre of the stable, fed her well with oats about nine o'clock, and after taking a good smoke, went to bed, knowing that my old mare was a truth-telling animal, and that she'd give a good report of herself in the morning. I hadn't got fairly to sleep before the old 'oman hunched me, and wanted to know what on airth was the matter out at the stable.

"Says I, 'Go tu sleep, Peggy, it is nothing but Kate—she is kicking off flies, I guess!'

"Purty soon she hunched me again, and says she,

"'Mr Hitchcock, du git up and see what in the world is the matter with Kate, for she is kicking most powerfully.'

"'Lay still, Peggy, Kate will take care of herself, I guess.'

"Wal, the next morning, about daylight, Bradley, with bridle in hand, cum to the stable, as true as the book of Genesis; when he saw the old roan's sides, starn, and head, he cursed and swore worse than you did, mister, when I came down on your toes. Arter breakfast that morning Joe Davis cum to my house, and says he,

"'Bradley's old roan is nearly dead—she's cut all to pieces, and can scarcely move.'

"'I want to know,' says I, 'how on airth did it happen?'

"Now, Joe Davis was a member of the same church with

Bradley, and whilst we were talking, up cum that everlastin' hypocrite, and says he,

"'Mr Hitchcock, my old roan is ruined!'

"'Du tell,' says I.

"'She is cut all to pieces,' says he; 'do you know whether she was in your stable, Mr Hitchcock, last night?'

"Wal, mister, with this I let out;

"'Do I *know* it?'—(the Yankee here, in illustration, made a sudden advance upon the dandy, who made way for him unconsciously, as it were)—'Do I know it? you no-souled, shad-bellied, squash-headed, old night-owl you!—you hay-hookin', corn-cribbin', fodder-fudgin', cent-shavin', whitlin'-of-nuthin' you!—Kate kicks like a mere dumb beast, but I've reduced the thing to a *science*!'" The Yankee had not ceased to advance, or the dandy, in his astonishment, to retreat; and now, the motion of the latter being accelerated by an apparent demonstration on the part of the former to "suit the action to the word," he found himself in the "social hall," tumbling backwards over a pile of baggage, and tearing the knees of his pants as he scrambled up, a perfect scream of laughter stunning him from all sides.

The defeat was total: a few moments afterwards he was dragging his own trunk ashore, while Mr Hitchcock finished his story on the boiler deck.

XLI.

WHY MR SELLUM DISPOSED OF THE HORSE.

A MATTER OF FACT STORY.

MR SELLUM is a horse-jockey; that is, when he is not more profitably employed, he is not ashamed, so he says, to "try his fort'n in that very respectable callin'." He dropped in at Bailey's bazaar a few weeks since; and very soon after Sellum arrived, a superb-looking charger, mounted by a graceful rider, pranced up the court, and entered the arena, to be sold at public vendue.

"There he is, gents," said the auctioneer; "there he is! a splendid beast! Look at him, and judge for yourselves. There's an ear, a forearm, a nostril, an eye for you! That animal, gentlemen, was 'knocked down' to a gentleman under the

hammer, less than three months ago, for two hundred and eighty dollars. But I am authorized to day to sell that horse—let him bring more or less. He's a beauty; fine figure, splendid saddle-beast, natural gait fourteen miles to the hour, trots a mile in 2' 42"; and altogether he's a great horse," which last remark no one could doubt, for he weighed eleven hundred pounds. "How much am I offered for that beautiful beast?" continued the auctioneer. "Move him round the ring once, John. That's it; elegant motion."

There the horse stopped short, and refused to budge an inch, though John buried the rowels to the shoulder in his ribs.

"Give me a bid, gentleman, if you please. The horse must be sold."

"Twenty dollars," was heard from one corner of the room.

"*Twenty dollars!*" screamed the auctioneer, with a seemingly ironical laugh. "I'm offered the stupendous sum of twenty dollars, gentlemen, for that horse. Are there no sausage-makers in this congregation? I'm offered only twenty dollars! But, as I said before, the horse is here to be sold, so I shall accept the bid. Twenty dollars. I'm offered twenty dollars—twenty—twenty—give me thirty? Twenty dollars—twenty—did I hear thirty? Twenty dollars—give *five*? Twenty dollars—say *one*. Shall I have twenty-one? If that's the best bid, down he must go, gentlemen! Twenty dollars! going! Twenty, only. Who's the fortunate buyer?"

"Sellum, John Sellum," said our friend.

"John Sellum, twenty dollars," says the auctioneer; "you've got a horse as is a horse, Mr Sellum."

And the fortunate John bore his magnificent charger away in triumph. A few days subsequently, an old acquaintance met John in the cars, and inquired about his purchase.

"Got that horse yet, John?"

"No, I sold him."

"So soon—what for?"

"Wal, nothin' in particular; but I didn't fancy the critter, all things considered."

"He was sound; wasn't he?"

"Wall, I reckon he wasn't; that is to say, I calk'late he wasn't. Show'd very good pluck, till I got him down into Washington Street, after I left the baz-a-r, but just opposite the Old South, he fell slap down on the pavement."

"Pshaw! you don't say so!"

"Yaas. Blindstagers—wust kind. But I didn't mind that, so I took him home, and nussed him up a little. Put him in the gig next day; wouldn't start a peg. Coax'd him, draw'd

him, run a hot wire in his ear, wollup'd him, and so forth; and finally, I built a fire under him. All no use; cunning cuss, sot rite down on the pile o' lighted shavins, and put it out."

Here his friend smiled.

"That wasn't nothin' tho'. Went to git inter the wag'n, and he started fore I gath'ed up the ribbins. Went 'bout three rods for'ard, and stopped agin quicker'n lightnin'. Brought him back, put him in the stall — low stable — got out of his reach, and then begun to whale him. Then he kicked up agin; knocked the floorin' all through over head, stove his shoes off, broke his halter, and then run back inter the stable-floor. Trap-door happened to be open, and down went his hind legs, clear to the hips. There I had him foul."

"Yes, you did," replied his friend.

"I got a piece o' plank, an' I lam'd 'im for 'bout ten minutes, w'en, I be hanged, if he didn't *git mad!* and kick hisself out o' the hole. Next mornin' found him swelled up as big as four hogsheads. Rub'd sperrets o' turpentine all over 'im, an' the ungrateful rascal kep tryin' to kick me for't. Give him nothin' to eat for eight days, and the swellin' went down. Took him out o' the stable, and found him lame *behind.*"

"Very likely."

"But on a closer examination, see he was full as lame for'ard; one balanced t'other, so's he couldn't limp. One eye had been knocked out in the fight, but the head-stall kivered that misfort'n. Brushed 'im up kerefully, and put on the shiny harness. Led him down the street, an' met an old gent in search of a 'spirited' beast. Asked me if I wanted to sell?

"No, Sir," sez I.

"Wot'll you take for'm?" sez he.

"He's high strung," sez I.

"He is," sez he; "wot's he wuth?"

"I never warrants hosses," sez I. "If you want'm jest as he is. You're a good judge o' hosses, no doubt?" sez I.

"Wal, I am," sez he.

"Very well, then; you may have'm for two hundred dollars."

"The old gent pecked in his mouth, stroked his neck, looked very knowin', and replied,

"I'll give you a hundred and fifty."

"Split the difference," sez I.

"Done!" sez he.

"The hoss is yourn," sez I.

"He give me the money, took the animal, an' that's the last I've heene o' him or that hoss."

"Possible!" exclaimed his friend.

"Yaas, under all the circumstances, I thort it wan't best to keep the beast, you see, so I let him go."

"Where are you going now?" asked his friend.

"To York."

"When do you return?"

"*Not at present*," said Mr Sellum, slyly; and I reckon he didn't.

XLII.

METAPHYSICS.

Most people are of opinion that whatever is, is right; but, strange to say, an acquaintance with pen and ink and that sort of thing is very apt to reverse this opinion. No sooner do we begin to study metaphysics, than we find how egregiously we have been mistaken, in supposing that "Master Parson is really Master Parson."

I, for my part, have a high opinion of metaphysical studies, and think the science a very useful one, because it teaches people what sheer nobodies they are. The only objection is, they are not disposed to lay this truth sufficiently to heart, but continue to give themselves airs, just as if some folks were really some folks.

Old Doctor Sobersides, the minister of Pumkinville, where I lived in my youth, was one of the metaphysical divines of the old school, and could cavil upon the ninth part of a hair about entities and quiddities, nominalism and realism, free will and necessity, with which sort of learning he used to stuff his sermons and astound his learned hearers, the bumpkins. They never doubted that it was all true, but were apt to say with the old woman in Molière:

"Il parle si bien que je n'entend goutte."

I remember a conversation that happened at my grandfather's, in which the Doctor had some difficulty in making his metaphysics all "as clear as preaching." There was my grandfather; Uncle Tim, who was the greatest hand at raising onions in our part of the country, but "not knowing metaphysics, had no notion of the true reason of his not being sad;" my Aunt Judy Keturah Titterwell, who could knit stockings like all

possest, but could not syllogize; Malachi Muggs, our hired man, that drove the oxen, and Isaac Thrasher, the district schoolmaster, who had dropped in to warm his fingers and get a drink of cider. Something was under discussion, and my grandfather could make nothing of it; but the Doctor said it was "metaphysically true."

"Pray, Doctor," said Uncle Tim, "tell me something about metaphysics; I have often heard of that science, but never for my life could find out what it was."

"Metaphysics," said the Doctor, "is the science of abstractions."

"I'm no wiser for that explanation," said Uncle Tim.

"It treats," said the Doctor, "of matters most profound and sublime, a little difficult perhaps for a common intellect or an unschooled capacity to fathom, but not the less important, on that account, to all living beings."

"What does it teach?" asked the schoolmaster.

"It is not applied so much to the operation of teaching," answered the Doctor, "as to that of inquiring; and the chief inquiry is, whether things are, or whether they are not."

"I don't understand the question," said Uncle Tim, taking the pipe out of his mouth.

"For example, whether this earth on which we tread," said the Doctor, giving a heavy stamp on the floor, and setting his foot slap on the cat's tail, "whether this earth does really exist, or whether it does not exist,"

"That is a point of considerable consequence to settle," said my grandfather.

"Especially," added the schoolmaster, "to the holders of real estate."

"Now the earth," continued the Doctor, "may exist—"

"Who the dogs ever doubted that?" asked Uncle Tim.

"A great many men," said the Doctor, "and some very learned ones."

Uncle Tim stared a moment, and then began to fill up his pipe, whistling the tune of High Betty Martin, while the Doctor went on:

"The earth, I say, may exist, although Bishop Berkeley has proved beyond all possible gainsaying or denial, that it does not exist. The case is clear; the only difficulty is, to know whether we shall believe it or not."

"And how," asked Uncle Tim, "is all this to be found out?"

"By digging down to the first principles," answered the Doctor.

"Ay," interrupted Malachi, "there is nothing equal to the spade and pickaxe."

"That is true," said my grandfather, going on in Malachi's way, "'tis by digging for the foundation that we shall find out whether the world exists or not; for, if we dig to the bottom of the earth and find a foundation—why then we are sure of it. But if we find no foundation, it is clear that the world stands upon nothing, or, in other words, that it does not stand at all; therefore, it stands to reason—"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted the Doctor, "but you totally mistake me; I used the word *digging* metaphorically, meaning the profoundest cogitation and research into the nature of things. That is the way in which we may ascertain whether things are or whether they are not."

"But if a man can't believe his eyes," said Uncle Tim, "what signifies talking about it?"

"Our eyes," said the Doctor, "are nothing at all but the inlets of sensation, and when we see a thing, all we are aware of is, that we have a sensation of it; we are not sure that the thing exists. We are sure of nothing that we see with our eyes."

"Not without spectacles," said Aunt Judy.

"Plato, for instance, maintains that the sensation of any object is produced by a perpetual succession of copies, images, or counterfeits streaming off from the object to the organs of sensation. Descartes, too, has explained the matter upon the principle of whirligigs."

"But does the world exist?" asked the schoolmaster.

"A good deal may be said on both sides," replied the Doctor, "though the ablest heads are for non-existence."

"In common cases," said Uncle Tim, "those who utter nonsense are considered blockheads."

"But in metaphysics," said the Doctor, "the case is different."

"Now all this is hocus pocus to me," said Aunt Judy, suspending her knitting work, and scratching her forehead with one of the needles. "I don't understand a bit more of the business than I did at first."

"I'll be bound there is many a learned professor," said Uncle Tim, "could say the same after spinning a long yarn of metaphysics."

The Doctor did not admire this gibe at his favourite science.

"That is as the case may be," said he; "this thing or that thing may be dubious, but what then? Doubt is the beginning of wisdom."

"No doubt of that," said my grandfather, beginning to poke the fire, "but when a man has got through his doubting what does he begin to build upon in the metaphysical way?"

"Why, he begins by taking something for granted," said the Doctor.

"But is that a sure way of going to work?"

"'Tis the only thing he can do," replied the Doctor, after a pause, and rubbing his forehead as if he was not altogether satisfied that his foundation was a solid one. My grandfather might have posed him with another question, but he poked the fire and let him go on.

"Metaphysics, to speak exactly—"

"Ah," interrupted the schoolmaster, "bring it down to vulgar fractions, and then we shall understand it."

"'Tis the consideration of immateriality, or the mere spirit and essence of things."

"Come, come," said Aunt Judy, taking a pinch of snuff, "now I see into it."

"Thus, man is considered, not in his corporeality, but in his essence or capability of being; for a man metaphysically, or to metaphysical purposes, hath two natures, that of spirituality and that of corporeity, which may be considered separate."

"What man?" asked Uncle Tim.

"Why any man; Malachi there, for example, I may consider him as Malachi spiritual or Malachi corporal."

"That is true," said Malachi, "for when I was in the militia, they made me a sixteenth corporal, and I carried grog to the drummer."

"That is another affair," said the Doctor, in continuation, "we speak of man in his essence; we speak also of the essence of locality, the essence of duration—"

"And essence of peppermint," said Aunt Judy.

"Pooh!" said the Doctor, "the essence I mean is quite a different concern."

"Something too fine to be dribbled through the worm of a still," said my grandfather.

"Then I am all in the dark again," rejoined Aunt Judy.

"By the spirit and essence of things I mean things in the abstract."

"And what becomes of a thing when it gets into the abstract?" asked Uncle Tim.

"Why, it becomes an abstraction."

"There we are again," said Uncle Tim; "but what the deuce is an abstraction?"

"It's a thing that has no matter; that is, it cannot be felt,

seen, heard, smelt, or tasted ; it has no substance or solidity ; it is neither large nor small, hot nor cold, long nor short."

"Then what is the long and short of it?" asked the school-master.

"Abstraction," replied the Doctor.

"Suppose, for instance," said Malachi, "that I had a pitchfork—"

"Ay," said the Doctor, "consider a pitchfork in general ; that is, neither this one nor that one, nor any particular one, but a pitchfork or pitchforks divested of their materiality — these are things in the abstract."

"They are things in the hay-mow," said Malachi.

"Pray," said Uncle Tim, "have there been many such things discovered?"

"Discovered!" returned the Doctor, "why all things, whether in heaven or upon the earth, or in the waters under the earth, whether small or great, visible or invisible, animate or inanimate ; whatever the eye can see, or the ear can hear, or the nose can smell, or the fingers touch ; finally, whatever exists or is imaginable in *rerum natura*, past, present, or to come, all may be abstractions."

"Indeed!" said Uncle Tim, "pray what do you make of the abstraction of a red cow?"

"A red cow," said the Doctor, "considered metaphysically, or as an abstraction, is an animal possessing neither hide nor horns, bones nor flesh, but is the mere type, eidolon, and fantastical semblance of these parts of a quadruped. It has a shape without any substance, and no colour at all, for its redness is the mere counterfeit or imagination of such. As it lacks the positive, so is it also deficient in the accidental properties of all the animals of its tribe, for it has no locomotion, stability, or endurance, neither goes to pasture, gives milk, chews the cud, nor performs any other function of a horned beast, but is a mere creature of the brain, begotten by a freak of the fancy, and nourished by a conceit of the imagination."

"A dog's foot!" exclaimed Aunt Judy. "All the metaphysics under the sun wouldn't make a pound of butter."

"That's a fact!" said Uncle Tim.

XLIII.

A TIGHT RACE CONSIDERIN'.

DURING my medical studies, passed in a small village in Mississippi, I became acquainted with a family named Hibbs, residing a few miles in the country. The family consisted of Mr and Mrs Hibbs and son. They were plain, unlettered people, honest in intent and deed, but overflowing with that which amply made up for all their deficiencies of education, namely, warm-hearted hospitality, the distinguishing trait of southern character. They were originally from Virginia, from whence they had emigrated in quest of a c'lime more genial, and a soil more productive than that in which their fathers toiled.

Their search had been rewarded, their expectations realized, and now, in their old age, though not wealthy in the "Astorian" sense, still they had sufficient to keep the "wolf from the door," and drop something more substantial than condolence and tears, in the hat that poverty hands round for the kind offerings of humanity.

The old man was like the generality of old planters, men whose ambition is embraced by the family or social circle, and whose thoughts turn more on the relative value of "Sea Island" and "Mastodon," and the improvement of their plantations, than the "glorious victories of Whiggery in Kentucky," or the "triumphs of democracy in Arkansas."

The old lady was a shrewd, active dame, kind-hearted and long-tongued, benevolent and impartial, making her coffee as strong for the poor pedestrian, with his all upon his back, as the broadcloth sojourner, with his "up-country pacer."

She was a member of the church, as well as the daughter of a man who had once owned a race-horse: and these circumstances gave her an indisputable right, she thought, to "let on all she knew," when religion or horse-flesh was the theme.

At one moment, she would be heard discussing whether the new "circus rider," (as she always called the preacher,) was as affecting in Timothy as the old one was pathetic in Paul, and anon, protecting dad's horse from the invidious comparisons of some visitor, who, having heard, perhaps, that such horses as Fashion and Boston existed, thought himself qualified to doubt

the old lady's assertion that her father's horse "Shumach" had run a mile on one particular occasion.

"Don't tell *me*," was her never-failing reply to their doubts, "don't tell *me* 'bout Fashun or Bosting, or any other beating 'Shumach' a fair race, for the thing was unfeasible: didn't he run a mile a minute by Squire Dim's watch, which always stooped 'actly at twelve, and didn't he start a minute afore, and git out, jes as the long hand war givin' its last quiver on ketchin' the short leg of the watch? And didn't he beat everthing in Virginny 'cept once? Dad and the folks said he'd beat then, if young Mr Spotswood hadn't give 'old Swaga,' Shumach's rider, some of that 'Croton water,' and jis 'fore the race Swage or Shumach, I don't 'stinctly 'member which, but one of them had to 'let down,' and so dad's hoss got beat."

The son I will describe in a few words. Imbibing his parents' contempt for letters, he was very illiterate, and as he had not enjoyed the equivalent of travel, was extremely ignorant on all matters not relating to hunting or plantation duties. He was a stout, active fellow, with a merry twinkling of the eye, indicative of humour, and partiality for practical joking. We had become very intimate, he instructing me in "forest lore," and I, in return, giving amusing stories, or, what was as much to his liking, occasional introductions to my hunting-flask.

Now that I have introduced the "Dramatis Personæ," I will proceed with my story. By way of relaxation, and to relieve the tedium incident more or less to a student's life, I would take my gun, walk out to old Hibbs's, spend a day or two, and return refreshed to my books.

One fine afternoon I started upon such an excursion, and as I had, upon a previous occasion, missed killing a fine buck, owing to my having nothing but squirrel shot, I determined to go this time for the "antlered monarch," by loading one barrel with fifteen "blue whistlers," reserving the other for small game.

At the near end of the plantation was a fine spring, and adjacent, a small cave, the entrance artfully or naturally concealed, save to one acquainted with its locality. The cave was nothing but one of those subterranean washes so common in the west and south, and called "sink-holes."

It was known only to young H. and myself, and we, for peculiar reasons, kept secret, having put it in requisition as the depository of a jug of "old Bourbon," which we favoured, and as the old folks abominated drinking, we had found convenient

to keep there, whither we would repair to get our drinks, and return to the house to hear them descant on the evils of drinking, and "vow no 'drap,' 'cept in doctor's truck, should ever come on their plantation."

Feeling very thirsty, I took my way by the spring that evening. As I descended the hill o'er-topping it, I beheld the hind parts of a bear slowly being drawn into the cave.

My heart bounded at the idea of killing a bear, and my plans were formed in a second. I had no dogs—the house was distant—and the bear becoming "small by degrees, and beautifully less." Every hunter knows, if you shoot a squirrel in the head when it's sticking out of a hole, ten to one he'll jump out; and I reasoned that if this were true regarding squirrels, might not the operation of the same principle extract a bear, applying it low down in the back.

Quick as thought I levelled my gun and fired, intending to give him the buckshot when his body appeared; but what was my surprise and horror, when, instead of a bear rolling out, the parts were jerked nervously in, and the well-known voice of young H. reached my ears.

"Murder! Ingins! snakes and knuckle-burs! Oh! Lordy! 'nuff!—'nuff!—take him off! Jis let me off this wunst, dad, and I'll never run mam's colt again! Oh, Lordy! Lordy! *all my brains blowed clean out!* Snakes! snakes!" yelled he, in a shriller tone, if possible, "Old Scratch on the outside and snakes in the sink-hole! I'll die a Christian, anyhow, and if I die before I wake," and out scrambled poor H., pursued by a large black-snake.

If my life had depended on it, I could not have restrained my laughter. Down fell the gun, and down dropped I shrieking convulsively. The hill was steep, and over and over I went, until my head striking against a stump at the bottom, stopped me, half senseless. On recovering somewhat from the stunning blow, I found Hibbs upon me, taking satisfaction from me for having blowed out his brains. A contest ensued, and H. finally relinquished his hold, but I saw from the knitting of his brows, that the bear-storm, instead of being over, was just brewing.

"Mr Tensas," he said with awful dignity, "I'm sorry I put into you 'fore you cum to, but you're at yourself now, and as you've tuck a shot at me, it's no more than far I should have a chance 'fore the hunt's up."

It was with the greatest difficulty I could get H. to bear with me until I explained the mistake; but as soon as he learned it, he broke out in a huge laugh:

"Oh, Dod busted! that's 'nuff; you has my pardon. I

ought to know'd you didn't 'tend it; 'sides, you jis scraped the skin. I war wus skeered than hurt, and if you'll go to the house and beg me off from the old folks, I'll never let on you cudden tell copperas breeches from bar-skin."

Promising that I would use my influence, I proposed taking a drink, and that he should tell me how he had incurred his parents' anger. He assented, and after we had inspected the cave, and seen that it held no othe. serpent than the one we craved, we entered its cool recess, and H. commenced:

"You see, Doc, I'd heered so much from mam 'bout her dad's Shumach and his nigger Swage, and the mile a minute, and the Croton water what was gin him, and how she bleved that if it warn't for bettin', and the cussin' and fightin', runnin' race-hosses warn't the sin folks said it war: and if they war anything to make her 'gret gettin' religion and jinin' the church, it war cos she couldn't 'tend races, and have a race-colt of her own to comfort her 'clinin' years, sich as her daddy had afore her; so I couldn't rest for wantin' to see a hoss-race, and go shares, p'raps, in the colt she war wishin' for.

"And then I'd think what sort of a hoss I'd want him to be—a quarter nag, a mile critter, or a hoss what could run (fur all mam says it can't be did) a whole four mile at a stretch. Sometimes I think I'd rather own a quarter nag, for the suspense wouldn't long be hung, and then we could run up the road to old Nick Bamer's cow-pen, and Sally is almost alicers out thar in the cool of the evenin'; and in course we wouldn't be so cruel as to run the poor critter in the heat of the day. But then agin, I'd think I'd rather have a miler; for the 'citement would be greater, and we could run down the road to old Wither's orchard, an his gal Miry is frightfully fond of sunnin' herself thar, when she 'spects me 'long, and she'd hear of the race, certain; but then thar war the four miler for my thinkin', and I'd knew'd in such case the 'citement would be greatest of all, and you know, too, from dad's stable to the grocery is jist four miles, an' in case of any 'spute, all hands would be willin' to run over, even if it had to be tried a dozen times.

"So I never could 'cide on which sort of a colt to wish for. It was fust one, then t'others, till I was nearly 'stracted. So I found the best way was to get the hcoss fust, and then 'termine whether it should be Sally Bamer's, and the cow-pen; Miry Withers, and the peach orchard; or Spillman's grocery, with the bald face.

"You've seed my black colt, that one that dad's father gin me in his will when he died, and I 'spect the reason he wrote that will war, that he might have wun then, for it's more then

he had when he was alive, for granma war a monstus over-bearin' woman. The colt would cum up in my mind, every time I'd think whar I was to git a hoss. 'Git out!' said I at fust—he never could run, and 'sides if he could, mam rides him now, an he's too old for anything, 'cept totin her and bein' called mine; for you see, though he war named Colt, yet for the old lady to call him old, would bin like the bar 'fecting contempt for the rabbit, on account of the shortness of his tail.

"Well, thought I, it does look sorter unpromisin', but it's Colt or none; so I 'termined to put him in trainin' the fust chance. Last Saturday, who should cum ridin' up but the new circuit preacher, a long-legged, weakly, sickly, never-contented-onless-the-best-on-the-plantation-war-cooked-fur-him sort of a man; but I didn't look at him twice, his hoss was the critter that took my eye; for the minute I looked at him, I knew him to be the same hoss as Sam Spooner used to win all his splurgin' dimes with, the folks said, and wot he used to ride past our house so fine on. The hoss war a heap the wuss for age and change of masters; for preachers, though they're mity 'ticular 'bout thar own comfort, seldom tends to thar hosses; for one is privit property and 'tother generally borried.

"I seed from the way the preacher rid that he didn't know the animal he war straddlin'; but I did, and I 'termined I wouldn't lose sich a chance of trainin' Colt by the side of a hoss wot had run real races. So that night, arter prayers and the folks was abed, I and Nigger Bill tuck the hosses and carried them down to the pastur'. It war a forty-aker lot, and consequently jist a quarter across—for I thought it best to promote Colt, by degrees, to a four-miler. When we got thar, the preacher's hoss showed he war willin'; but Colt, dang him! commenced nibblin' a fodder-stack over the fence. I nearly cried for vexment, but an idea struck me; I hitched the critter, and told Bill to get on Colt and stick tight wen I giv' the word. Bill got reddy, and unbeknownst to him I pulled up a bunch of nettles, and, as I clapped them under Colt's tail, yelled, 'Go!' Down shut his graceful like a steel-trap, and away he shot so quick an' fast that he jumpt clean out from under Bill, and got nearly to the end of the quarter 'fore the nigger toch the ground: he lit on his head, and in course warn't hurt—so we cotched Colt, an' I mounted him.

"The next time I said 'go' he showed that age hadn't spiled his legs or memory. Bill 'an me 'greed we could run him now, so Bill mounted Preacher and we got ready. Thar war a narrer part of the track 'tween two oaks, but as it war

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near the end of the quarter, I 'spected to pass Preacher 'fore we got thar, so I warn't afraid of barkin' my shins.

"We tuck a fair start, and off we went like a peeled ingun, an' I soon 'scovered that it warn't such an easy matter to pass Preacher, though Colt dun delightful; we got nigh the trees, and Preacher warn't past yet, an' I 'gan to get skeered, for it warn't more than wide enuf for a horse and a half; so I hol-lered to Bill to hold up, but the imperdent nigger turned his ugly pictur, and said, 'he'd be cussed if he warn't goin' to play his han' out.' I gin him to understand he'd better fix for a foot-race when we stopt, and tried to hold up Colt, but he wouldn't stop. We reached the oaks, Colt tried to pass Preacher, Preacher tried to pass Colt, and cowollop, crosch, cochunk! we all cum down like 'himmons arter frost. Colt got up and won the race; Preacher tried hard to rise, but one hind leg had got threw the stirrup, an' tother in the head stall, an' he had to lay still, doubled up like a long nigger in a short bed. I lit on my feet, but Nigger Bill war gone entire. I looked up in the fork of one of the oaks, and thar he war sittin', lookin' very composed on surroundin' nature. I couldn't git him down till I promised not to hurt him for disobeyin' orders, when he slid down. We'd 'nuff racin' for that night, so we put up the hosses and went to bed.

"Next morning the folks got ready for church, when it was diskivered that the hosses had got out. I an' Bill started off to look for them; we found them cleer off in the field, tryin' to git in the pastur' to run the last night's race over, old Blaze, the reverlushunary mule, bein' along to act as judge.

"By the time we got to the house it war nigh on to meet-in' hour; and dad had started to the preachin', to tell th' folks to sing on, as preacher and mam would be 'long bimeby. As the passun war in a hurry, and had been complainin' that his creetur war dull, I 'suated him to put on uncle Jim's spurs what he fotch from Mexico. I saddled the passun's hoss, takin' 'ticular pains to let the saddle-blanket come down low in the flank. By the time these fixins war threw, mam war 'head nigh on to a quarter. 'We must ride on, passun,' I said, 'or the folks'll think we is lost.' So I whipt up the mule I rid, the passun chirrupt and chuct to make his crittur gallop, but the animal didn't mind him a pic. I 'gan to snicker, an' the passun 'gan to git vext; sudden he thought of his spurs, so he ris up, an' drove them *vim* in his hoss's flax, till they went through his saddle-blanket, and like to bored his nag to the holler. By gosh! but it war a quickener—the hoss kickt till the passun had to hug him round the neck to keep from

pitchin' him over his head. He next jump't up 'bout as high as a rail fence, passun holdin' on and tryin' to git his spurs—but they were lockt—his breeches split plum across with the strain, and the piece of wearin' truck wot's next the skin made a monstrous putty flag as the old hoss, like drunkards to a barbecue, streakt it up the road.

"Mam war ridin' slowly along, thinkin' how sorry she was, cos Chary Dolin, who always led her off, had sich a bad cold, an' wouldn't be able to 'sist her singin' to-day. She war practisin' the hymns, and had got as far whar it says, 'I have a race to run,' when the passun huv in sight, an' in 'bout the dodgin' of a diedapper, she found thar war truth in the words, for the colt, hearin' the hoss cumin' up behind, began to show symptoms of runnin'; but when he heard the passun holler, 'wo wo!' to his horse, he thought it war me shoutin' 'go!' and sure 'nuff off they started jis as the passun got up even; so it war a fair race. Whoop! git out, but it war egsitin'—the dust flew, and the rail-fence appeered strate as a rifle. Thar war the passun, his legs fast to the critter's flax, arms lockt round his neck, face as pale as a rabbit's belly, and the white flag streemin' far behind—and thar war Mam, fust on one side, then on t'other, her new caliker swelled up round her like a bear with the dropsy, the old lady so much surprized she cud dent ride stedly, an' tryin' to stop her colt, but he war too well trained to stop while he heard 'go!'

"Mam got 'sited at last, and her eyes 'gan to glimmer like she seen her daddy's ghost axin' 'if he ever trained up a child or a race-hoss to be 'fraid of a small brush on a Sunday,' she commenced ridin' beautiful; she braced herself up in the saddle, and began to make calkerlations how she war to win the race, for it war nose and nose, and she saw the passun spurrin' his critter every jump. She tuk off her shoe, and the way a number ten go-to-meetin' brogan commenced givin' a hoss particular Moses, were a caution to hoss-flesh—but still it kept nose and nose. She found she war carryin' too much weight for Colt, so she 'gan to throw off plunder, till nuthin' was left but her saddle and close, and the spurs kept tellin' still. The old woman commenced strippin' to lighten till it wouldn't bin the clean thing for her to have taken off one dud more; an' then when she found it war no use while the spurs lasted, she got cantankerous.

"'Passun,' said she, 'I'll be cust if it's fair or gentlemanly for you, a preacher of the gospel, to take advantage of an old woman this way, usin' spurs when you know *she* can't wear 'em—'taint Christian-like nuther,' and she bust into cryin'.

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"Wo! Miss Hibbs! Wo! Stop! Madam! Wo! Your son!" he attempted to say, when the old woman tuck him on the back of the head, and fillin' his mouth with right smart of a saddle-horn, and stoppin' the talk, as far as his share went for the present.

"By this time they'd got nigh on to the meetin'-house, and the folks were harkin' away on 'Old Hundred,' and wonderin' what could have become of the passun and Mam Hibbs. One sister in a long beard axt another brethren in church, if she'd heerd anything 'bout that New York preecher runnin' way with a woman old enough to be his muther. The brethrens gin a long sigh an' groaned:

"'It ain't possible! marciful heavens! you don't 'spicion?' wen the sound of the hosses comin', roused them up like a touch of the agur, an' broke off their serpent-talk.

"Dad run out to see what was to pay, but when he seed the hosses so close together, the passun spurrin', and mam ridin' close war skase; whar she cum, he knew her fix in a second, and 'tarmined to help her; so clinchin' a saplin', he hid 'hind a stump 'bout ten steps off, and held on for the hosses. On they went in beautiful style, the passun's spurs tellin' terrible, and mam's shoe operatin' 'no small pile of punkins,'—passun stretched out the length of two hosses, while mam sot as stiff and strate as a bull yearling in his fust fight, hittin' her nag fust on one side, next on t'other, and the third for the passun, who had chawed the horn till little of the saddle, and less of his teeth war left, and his voice sounded as holler as a jackass-nicker in an old saw-mill.

"The hosses war nose and nose, jam up together so close that mam's last kiverin' and passun's flag had got lockt, an' 'tween bleached domestic and striped lindsey made a beautiful banner for the pious racers.

"On they went like a small arthquake, an' it seemed like it war goin' to be a draun race; but dad, when they got to him, let down with all his might on Colt, scarin' him so bad that he jumpt clean ahead of passun, beatin' him by a neck, buttin' his own head agin the meetin'-house, an' pitchin' man, like a lam for the sacryfise, plum through the winder 'mongst the mourners, leavin' her only garment flutterin' on a nail in the sash. The men shot their eyes and f rambled outen the house, an' the woman gin mam so much of their close that they like to put themselves in the same fix.

"The passun quit the circuit, and I haven't been home yet."

XLIV.

A SHARK STORY.

"WELL, gentlemen, I'll go ahead, if you say so. Here's the story. It is true, upon my honour, from beginning to end—every word of it. I once crossed over to Faulkner's island to fish for *tautauks*, as the north-side people call black fish, on the reefs hard by, in the Long Island Sound. Tim Titus (who died of the dropsy down at Shinnecock point, last spring) lived there then. Tim was a right good fellow, only he drank rather too much.

"It was during the latter part of July; the sharks and the dog-fish had just began to spoil sport. When Tim told me about the sharks, I resolved to go prepared to entertain these aquatic savages with all becoming attention and regard, if there should chance to be any interloping about our fishing-ground. So we rigged out a set of extra large hooks, and shipped some rope-yarn and steel chain, an axe, a couple of clubs, and an old harpoon, in addition to our ordinary equipments, and off we started. We threw out our anchor at half ebb-tide, and took some thumping large fish; two of them weighed thirteen pounds—so you may judge. The reef where we lay was about half a mile from the island, and, perhaps, a mile from the Connecticut shore. We floated there, very quietly, throwing out and hauling in, until the breaking of my line, with a sudden and severe jerk, informed me that the sea attorneys were in waiting down-stairs; and we accordingly prepared to give them a retainer. A salt pork cloak upon one of our magnum hooks forthwith engaged one of the gentlemen in our service. We got him alongside, and by dint of piercing, and thrusting, and banging, we accomplished a most exciting and merry murder. We had business enough of the kind to keep us employed until near low water. By this time the sharks had all cleared out, and the black fish were biting again; the rock began to make its appearance above the water, and in a little while its hard bald head was entirely dry. Tim now proposed to set me out upon the rock, while he rowed ashore to get the jug, which, strange to say, we had left at the house. I assented to this proposition; first, because I began to feel the effects of the sun upon my tongue, and needed something to take, by the way of

medicine; and secondly, because the rock was a favourite spot for rod and reel, and famous for luck: so I took my *traps*, and a box of bait, and jumped upon my new station. Tim made for the island.

"Not many men would willingly have been left upon a little barren reef that was covered by every flow of the tide, in the midst of a waste of waters, at such a distance from the shore, even with an assurance from a companion more to be depended upon than mine, that he would return immediately and take him off. But somehow or other, the excitement of the sport was so high, and the romance of the situation was so delightful, that I thought of nothing else but the prospect of my fun, and the contemplation of the novelty and beauty of the scene. It was a mild, pleasant afternoon, in harvest time. The sky was clear and pure. The deep blue sound, heaving all around me, was studded with craft of all descriptions and dimensions, from the dipping sail-boat to the rolling merchantman, sinking and rising like sea-birds sporting with their white wings in the surge. The grain and grass on the neighbouring farms were gold and green, and gracefully they bent obeisance to a gently breathing south-wester. Farther off, the high upland, and the distant coast, gave a dim relief to the prominent features of the landscape, and seemed the rich but dusky frame of a brilliant fairy picture. Then, how still it was! not a sound could be heard, except the occasional rustling of my own motion, and the water beating against the sides, or gurgling in the fissures of the rock, or except now and then the cry of a solitary saucy gull, who would come out of his way in the firmament, to see what I was doing without a boat, all alone, in the middle of the sound; and who would hover, and cry, and chatter, and make two or three circling swoops and dashes at me, and then, after having satisfied his curiosity, glide away in search of some other food to scream at.

"I soon became half indolent, and quite indifferent about fishing; so I stretched myself out at full length upon the rock and gave myself up to the luxury of looking and thinking. The divine exercise soon put me fast asleep. I dreamed away a couple of hours, and longer might have dreamed, but for a tired fish-hawk who chose to make my head his resting-place, and who waked and started me to my feet.

"Where is Tim Titus?' I muttered to myself, as I strained my eyes over the now darkened water. But none was near me to answer that interesting question, and nothing was to be seen of either Tim or his boat. 'He should have been here long

ere this,' thought I, 'and he promised faithfully not to stay long—could he have forgotten? or has he paid too much devotion to the jug?'

"I began to feel uneasy, for the tide was rising fast, and soon would cover the top of the rock, and high water-mark was at least a foot above my head. I buttoned up my coat, for either the coming coolness of the evening, or else my growing apprehensions, had set me trembling and chattering most painfully. I braced my nerves, and set my teeth, and tried to hum 'Begone, dull care,' keeping time with my fists upon my thighs. But what music! what melancholy merriment! I started and shuddered at the doleful sound of my own voice. I am not naturally a coward; but I should like to know the man who would not, in such a situation, be alarmed. It is a cruel death to die to be merely drowned, and to go through the ordinary common-places of suffocation; but to see your death gradually rising to your eyes, to feel the water rising, inch by inch, upon your shivering sides, and to anticipate the certainly coming, choking struggle for your last breath, when, with the gurgling sound of an overflowing brook taking a new direction, the cold brine pours into mouth, ears, and nostrils, usurping the seat and avenues of health and life, and, with gradual flow, stifling—smothering—suffocating! It were better to die a thousand common deaths.

"This is one of the instances in which, it must be admitted, salt water is not a pleasant subject of contemplation. However, the rock was not yet covered, and hope, blessed hope, stuck faithfully by me. To beguile, if possible, the weary time, I put on a bait, and threw out for fish. I was sooner successful than I could have wished to be, for hardly had my line struck the water, before the hook was swallowed, and my rod was bent with the dead hard pull of a twelve foot shark. I let him run about fifty yards, and then reeled up. He appeared not at all alarmed, and I could scarcely feel him bear upon my fine hair line. He followed the pull gently and unresisting, came up to the rock, laid his nose upon its side, and looked up into my face, not as if utterly unconcerned, but with a sort of quizzical impudence, as though he perfectly understood the precarious nature of my situation. The conduct of my captive renewed and increased my alarm. And well it might; for the tide was now running over a corner of the rock behind me, and a small stream rushed through a cleft, or fissure, by my side, and formed a puddle at my very feet. I broke my hook out of the monster's mouth, and leaned upon my rod for support.

“Where is Tim Titus?’ I cried aloud. ‘Curse on the drunken vagabond! Will he never come?’

“My ejaculations did no good. No Timothy appeared. It became evident that I must prepare for drowning, or for action. The reef was completely covered, and the water was above the soles of my feet. I was not much of a swimmer, and as to ever reaching the island, I could not even hope for that. However, there was no alternative, and I tried to encourage myself, by reflecting that necessity was the mother of invention, and that desperation will sometimes insure success. Besides, too, I considered and took comfort from the thought that I could wait for Tim, so long as I had a foothold, and then commit myself to the uncertain strength of my arms and legs for salvation. So I turned my bait-box upside down, and mounting upon that, endeavoured to comfort my spirits, and to be courageous, but submissive to my fate. I thought of death, and what it might bring with it, and I tried to repent of the multiplied iniquities of my almost wasted life; but I found that that was no place for a sinner to settle his accounts. Wretched soul, pray I could not.

“The water had not got above my ankles, when, to my inexpressible joy, I saw a sloop bending down towards me, with the evident intention of picking me up. No man can imagine what were the sensations of gratitude which filled my bosom at that moment.

“When she got within a hundred yards of the reef, I sung out to the man at the helm to luff up, and lie by, and lower the boat; but to my amazement, I could get no reply, nor notice of my request. I entreated them, for the love of heaven, to take me off; and I promised I know not what rewards, that were entirely beyond my power of bestowal. But the brutal wretch of a captain, muttering something to the effect of ‘that he hadn’t time to stop,’ and giving me the kind and sensible advice to pull off my coat and swim ashore, put the helm hard down, and away bore the sloop on the other tack.

“‘Heartless villain!’ I shrieked out, in the torture of my disappointment; ‘may God reward your inhumanity.’

“The crew answered my prayer with a coarse, loud laugh; and the cook asked me through a speaking trumpet, ‘If I was not afraid of catching cold.’—The black rascal!

“It now was time to strip; for my knees felt the cool tide, and the wind dying away, left a heavy swell, that swayed and shook the box upon which I was mounted, so that I had occasionally to stoop, and paddle with my hands against the water in order to preserve my perpendicular. The setting sun sent

his almost horizontal streams of fire across the dark waters, making them gloomy and terrific, by the contrast of his amber and purple glories.

"Something glided by me in the water, and then made a sudden halt. I looked upon the black mass, and, as my eye ran along its dark outline, I saw, with horror, that it was a shark; the identical monster out of whose mouth I had just broken my hook. He was fishing now for me, and was evidently only waiting for the tide to rise high enough above the rock, to glut at once his hunger and revenge. As the water continued to mount above my knees, he seemed to grow more hungry and familiar. At last, he made a desperate dash, and approaching within an inch of my legs, turned upon his back, and opened his huge jaws for an attack. With desperate strength, I thrust the end of my rod violently at his mouth; and the brass head, ringing against his teeth, threw him back into the deep current, and I lost sight of him entirely. This, however, was but a momentary repulse; for in the next minute he was close behind my back, and pulling at the skirts of my fustian coat, which hung dipping into the water. I leaned forward hastily, and endeavoured to extricate myself from the dangerous grasp; but the monster's teeth were too firmly set, and his immense strength nearly drew me over. So, down flew my rod, and off went my jacket, devoted peace-offerings to my voracious visitor.

"In an instant the waves all round me were lashed into froth and foam. No sooner was my poor old sporting friend drawn under the surface, than it was fought for by at least a dozen enormous combatants! The battle raged upon every side. High black fins rushed now here, now there, and long, strong tails scattered sleet and froth, and the brine was thrown up in jets, and eddied and curled, and fell, and swelled, like a whirlpool in Hell-gate.

"Of no long duration, however, was this fishy tourney. It seemed soon to be discovered that the prize contended for contained nothing edible but cheese and crackers, and no flesh; and as its mutilated fragments rose to the surface, the waves subsided into their former smooth condition. Not till then did I experience the real terrors of my situation. As I looked around me to see what had become of the robbers, I counted one, two, three, yes, up to twelve, successively, of the largest sharks I ever saw, floating in a circle around me, like divergent rays, all mathematically equidistant from the rock, and from each other; each perfectly motionless, and with his gloating, fiery eye, fixed full and fierce upon me. Basilisks and rattle-

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snakes! how the fire of their steady eyes entered into my heart! I was the centre of a circle, whose radii were sharks! I was the unsprung, or rather *unchewed* game, at which a pack of hunting sea-dogs were making a dead point!

"There was one old fellow, that kept within the circumference of the circle. He seemed to be a sort of captain, or leader of the band; or, rather, he acted as the coroner for the other twelve of the inquisition, that were summoned to sit on, and eat up my body. He glided around and about, and every now and then would stop, and touch his nose against some one of his comrades, and seem to consult, or to give instructions as to the time and mode of operation. Occasionally, he would skulk himself up towards me, and examine the condition of my flesh, and then again glide back, and rejoin the troupe, and flap his tail, and have another confabulation. The old rascal had, no doubt, been out into the highways and byways, and collected this company of his friends and kin-fish, and invited them to supper.

"I must confess that horribly as I felt, I could not help but think of a tea-party of demure old maids, sitting in a solemn circle, with their skinny hands in their laps, licking their expectant lips, while their hostess bustles about in the important functions of her preparations. With what an eye have I seen such appurtenances of humanity survey the location and adjustment of some special condiment, which is about to be submitted to criticism and consumption.

"My sensations began to be now most exquisite indeed; but I will not attempt to describe them. I was neither hot nor cold, frightened nor composed; but I had a combination of all kinds of feelings and emotions. The present, past, future, heaven, earth, my father and mother, a little girl I knew once, and the sharks, were all confusedly mixed up together, and swelled my crazy brain almost to bursting. I cried, and laughed, and spouted, and screamed for Tim Titus.

"In a fit of most wise madness I opened my broad-bladed fishing-knife, and waved it around my head with an air of defiance. As the tide continued to rise my extravagance of madness mounted. At one time I became persuaded that my tide-waiters were reasonable beings, who might be talked into mercy and humanity, if a body could only hit upon the right text. So I bowed, and gesticulated, and threw out my hands, and talked to them, as friends and brothers, members of my family, cousins, uncles, aunts, people waiting to have their bills paid; I scolded them as my servants; I abused them as duns; I implored them as jurymen sitting on the question of my life;

I congratulated and flattered them as my comrades upon some glorious enterprise; I sung and ranted to them, now as an actor in a play-house, and now as a elder at a camp-meeting; in one moment, roaring,

“ ‘ On this cold flinty rock I will lay down my head,’—

and in the next, giving out to my attentive hearers for singing, a hymn of Dr Watts so admirably appropriate to the occasion:

“ ‘ On slippery rocks I see them stand,
While fiery billows roll below.’

“ What said I, what did I not say! Prose and poetry, Scripture and drama, romance and ratiocination — out it came. ‘ *Quamdiu, Catalina, nostra patientia abutere?* ’—I sung out to the old captain, to begin with: ‘ My brave associates, partners of my toil,’—so ran the strain. ‘ On which side soever I turn my eyes,’—‘ Gentlemen of the jury,’—‘ I come not here to steal away your hearts,’—‘ You are not wood, you are not stones, but’—‘ Hah!’—‘ Begin, ye tormentors, your tortures are vain,’—‘ Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up to any sudden flood,’—‘ The angry flood that lashed her groaning sides,’—‘ Ladies and gentlemen,’—‘ My very noble and approved good masters,’—‘ Avaunt! and quit my sight; let the earth hide ye,’—‘ Lie lightly on his head, O earth!’—‘ O, heaven and earth, that it should come to this!’—‘ The torrent roared, and we did buffet it with lusty sinews, stemming it aside and oaring it with hearts of controversy,’—‘ Give me some drink, Titinius,’—‘ Drink, boys, drink, and drown dull sorrow,’—‘ For liquor it doth roll such comfort to the soul,’—‘ Romans, countrymen and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear,’—‘ Fellow-citizens, assembled as we are upon this interesting occasion, impressed with the truth and beauty,’—‘ Isle of beauty, fare thee well,’—‘ The quality of mercy is not strained,’—‘ *Magna veritas et prevalebit,*’—‘ Truth is potent, and ’—‘ Most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors,’—

“ ‘ Oh, now you weep, and I perceive you feel
The dint of pity; these are gracious drops.
Kind souls! what! weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded,’—

Ha! ha! ha!—and I broke out in a fit of most horrible laughter, as I thought of the mincemeat particles of my lacerated jacket.

“ In the mean time, the water had got well up towards my shoulders, and while I was shaking and vibrating upon my uncertain foot-hold, I felt the cold nose of the captain of the band

snubbing against my side. Desperately, and without a definite object, I struck my knife at one of his eyes, and, by some singular fortune, cut it out clean from the socket. The shark darted back, and halted. In an instant hope and reason came to my relief; and it occurred to me, that if I could only blind the monster, I might yet escape. Accordingly, I stood ready for the next attack. The loss of an eye did not seem to affect him much, for after shaking his head once or twice, he came up to me again, and when he was about half an inch off, turned upon his back. This was the critical moment. With a most unaccountable presence of mind, I laid hold of his nose with my left hand, and with my right scooped out his remaining organ of vision. He opened his big mouth, and champed his long teeth at me, in despair. But it was all over with him. I raised my right foot and gave him a hard shove, and he glided off into deep water, and went to the bottom.

"Well, gentlemen, I suppose you'd think it a hard story, but it's none the less a fact, that I served every remaining one of those nineteen sharks in the same fashion. They all came up to me, one by one, regularly and in order, and I scooped their eyes out, and gave them a shove, and they went off into deep water, just like so many lambs. By the time I had scooped out and blinded a couple of dozen of them, they began to seem so scarce that I thought I would swim for the island, and fight the rest for fun, on the way; but just then, Tim Titus hove in sight, and it had got to be almost dark, and I concluded to get aboard and rest myself."

XLV.

A BEAR STORY.

"WHAT a lie!" growled Daniel, as soon as the shark story was ended.

"Have my doubts;" suggested the somnolent Peter Probasco, with all the solemnity of a man who knows his situation; at the same time shaking his head and spilling his liquor.

"Ha! ha! ha! Ha! ha! ha!" roared all the rest of the boys together.

"Is he done?" asked Raynor Rock.

"How many shirks was there?" cried long John, putting in his unusual lingual oar.

"That story puts me in mind," said Venus Raynor, "about what I've heerd tell on Ebenezer Smith, at the time he went down to the North Pole on a walen' voyage."

"Now look out for a screamer," laughed out Raynor Rock, refilling his pipe. "Stand by, Mr Cypress, to let the sheet go."

"Is there anything uncommon about that yarn, Venus?"

"Oncommon! well, I expect it's putty smart and oncommon for a man to go to sea with a bear, all alone, on a bare cake of ice. Captain Smith's woman used to say she couldn't bear to think on't."

"Tell us the whole of that, Venus," said Ned—"that is, if it is true. Mine was—the whole of it—although Peter has his doubts."

"I can't tell it as well as Zoph can; but I've no 'jections to tell it my way, nohow. So, here goes—that's great brandy, Mr Cypress." There was a gurgling sound of "something-to-take," running.

"Well, they was down into Baffin's Bay, or some other o' them cold Norwegen bays at the north, where the rain freezes as it comes down, an' stands up in the air, on winter mornens, like great mountens o' ice, all in streaks. Well, the schooner was layen at anchor, and all the hands was out into the small boats, looken out for wales—all except the capting, who said he wa'n't very well that day. Well, he was walken up and down on deck, smoken and thinking, I expect, mostly, when all of a sudden he reckoned he see one o' them big white bears—polar bears, you know—big as thunder—with long teeth. He reckoned he see one on 'em slumpen along on a great cake o' ice that lay on the leeward side of the bay, up agin the bank. The old capting wanted to kill one o' them varments most wonderful, but he never lucked to get a chance. Now tho', he thought, the time had come for him to walk into one on 'em at laast, and fix his mutton for him right. So he run forrard and lay hold onto a small skiff, that was layen near the forc'stal, and run her out and launched her; then he tuk a drink, and—here's luck—and put in a stiff load of powder, a couple of balls, and jumped in, and pulled away for the ice.

"It wa'n't long 'fore he got 'cross the bay, for it was a narrer piece of water—not more than haaf a mile wide—and then he got out on to the ice. It was a smart and large cake, and the bear was 'way down to the tother end on it, by the edge o' the water. So he walked fust strut along, and then when he got putty cloast he walked round catecorned-like—like's if he was drivin' for a plain plover—so that the bear wouldn't

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think he was comen arter him, and he dragged himself along on his hands and knees, low down, mostly. Well, the bear didn't seem to mind him none, and he got up within 'bout fifty yards on him, and then he looked so savage and big—the bear did—that the captin stopped and rested on his knees, and put up his gun, and was agoin to shoot. But just then the bear turned round and snuffled up the captin—just as one of Lif's hounds snuff's up an old buck, Mr Cypress—and begun to walk towards him, slowly like. He com' along, the captin said, clump, clump, very slow, and made the ice bend and crack again under him, so that the water come up and putty much kivered it all over. Well, there the captin was all the time squat on his knees, with his gun pinte, waiten for the varment to come up, and his knees and legs was mighty cold by means of the water that the bear riz on the ice as I was mentionen. At last the bear seemed to make up his mind how the captin *would* taste, and so he left off walkin' slow, and started off on a smart swift trot, right towards the old man, with his mouth wide open, roaren, and his tail sticken out stiff. The captin kept still, looken out all the time putty sharp, I should say, till the beast got within about ten yards on him, and then he let him have it. He aimed right at the fleshy part of his heart, but the bear dodged at the flash, and rared up, and the balls went into his two hind legs, just by the jynt, one into each, and broke the thigh bones smack off, so that he went right down aft, on the ice, thump, on his hind quarters, with nothen standen but his fore legs, and his head riz up, a growlen at the captin. When the old man see him down, and tryin to slide along the ice to get his revenge, likely, thinks he to himself, thinks he, I might as well get up and go and cut that ere creter's throat. So he tuk out his knife and opened it.

"But when he started to get up, he found, to his astonishment, that he was fruz fast to the ice. Don't laugh: it's a fact; there an't no doubt. The water, you see, had been round him a smart and long while, whilst he was waiten for the bear, and it's wonderful cold in them regions, as I was sayen, and you'll freeze in a minit if you don't keep moven about smartly. So the captin he strained first one leg, and then he strained tother, but he couldn't move 'em none. They was both fruz fast into the ice, about an inch and a half deep, from knee to toe, tight as a Jersey oyster perryauger on a mud flat at low water. So he laid down his gun, and looked at the bear, and doubled up his fists.

"Come on, you bloody varmint,' says the old man, as the bear swallowed along on his hinder eend, comen at him.

"He kept getten weaker, tho,' and comen slower and slower all the time, so that at last he didn't seem to move none; and directly, when he'd got so near that the captin could jist give him a dig in the nose by reachen forrard putty smart and far, the captin see that the beast was fruz fast too, nor he couldn't move a step further forrard no ways. Then the captin burst out a laughen, and clapped his hands down on to his thighs, and roared. The bear seemed to be most omnighy mad at the old man's fun, and set up such a growlen that what should come to pass, but the ice cracks and breaks all around the captin and the bear, down to the water's edge, and the wind jist then a shiften, and comen off shore, away they floated on a cake of ice about ten by six, off to sea, without the darned a biscot or a quart o' liquor to stand 'em on the cruise! There they sot, the bear and the captin, just so near that when they both reached forrards, they could jist about touch noses, and nother one not able to move any part on him, only excepten his upper part and fore paws."

"By jolly! that was rather a critical predicament, Venus," cried Ned, buttoning his coat. "I should have thought that the captain's nose and ears and hands would have been frozen too."

"That's quite naytr'l to suppose, Sir, but you see the bear kept him warm in the upper parts, by being so cloast to him, and breathen hard and hot on the old man whenever he growled at him. Them polar bears is wonderful hardy animals, and has a monstrous deal o' heat into 'em, by means of their bein' able to stand such cold climates, I expect. And so the captin knowed this, and whenever he felt chilly, he just tuk up his ramrod and stirred up the old rascal, and made him roar and squeal, and then the hot breath would come pouren out all over the captin, and made the air quite moderat and pleasant."

"Well, go on, Venus. Take another horn first."

"Well, there a'nt much more on't. Off they went to sea, and sometimes the wind druv 'em nothe, and then agin it druv 'em southe, but they went southe mostly; and so it went on until they were out about three weeks. So at last, one afternoon—"

"But, Venus, stop: tell us, in the name of wonder, how did the captain contrive to support life all this time?"

"Why, Sir, to be sure, it was a hard kind o' life to support, but a hardy man will get used to almost—"

"No, no: what did he eat? what did he feed on?"

"O—O—I'd liked to've skipped that ere. Why, Sir, I've heerd different accounts as to that. Uncle Obe Verity told me he reckoned the captin cut off one of the bear's paws, when

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he lay stretched out asleep one day, with his jack-knife, and sucked that for fodder, and they say there's a smart deal o' nourishment in a white bear's foot. But if I may be allowed to spend my 'pinion, I should say my old man's account is the rightest, and that's—what's as follows. You see after they'd been out three days abouts, they begun to grow kind o' hungry, and then they got friendly, for misery loves company, you know; and the captin said the bear looked at 'im several times, very sorrowful, as much as to say, 'Captin, what the devil shall we do?' Well, one day they was sitten looken at each other, with the tears ready to burst out o' their eyes, when all of a hurry, somethin' come floppen up out o' the water onto the ice. The captin looked and see it was a seal. The bear's eyes kindled up as he looked at it, and then, the captin said, he giv him a wink to keep still. So there they sot, still as starch, till the seal not thinken nothin' o' them no more nor if they was dead, walked right up between 'em. Then slump! went down old whitey's nails into the fish's flesh, and the captin run his jack-knife into the tender loin. The seal soon got his bitters, and the captin cut a big hunk off the tale eend, and put it behind him, out o' the bear's reach, and then he felt smart and comfortable, for he had stores enough for a long cruise, though the bear couldn't say so much for himself.

"Well, the bear, by course, soon run out o' provisions, and had to put himself onto short allowance; and then he begun to show his natural temper. He first stretched himself out as far as he could go, and tried to hook the captin's piece o' seal, but when he found he couldn't reach that, he begun to blow and yell. Then he'd rare up and roar, and try to get himself clear from the ice. But mostly he rared up and roared, and pounded his big paws and head upon the ice, till by-and-by (jist as the captin said he expected) the ice cracked in two agin, and split right through between the bear and the captin, and there they was on two different pieces o' ice, the captin and the bear! The old man said he raaly felt sorry at parten company, and when the cake split and separate, he cut off about a haaf o' pound o' seal and chucked it to the bear. But either because it wan't enough for him, or else on account o' his feelen bad at the captin's goen, the beast wouldn't touch it to eat it, and he laid it down, and growled and moaned over it quite pitiful. Well, off they went, one one way, and t'other 'nother way, both feel'n pretty bad, I expect. After a while the captin got smart and cold, and felt mighty lonesome, and he said he raaly thought he'd a gi'n in and died, if they hadn't pick'd him up that artemnoon."

"Who picked him up, Venus?"

"Who? a codfish craft off o' Newfoundland, I expect. They didn't know what to make o' him when they first see him slingin up his hat for 'em. But they got out all their boats, and took a small swivel and a couple o' muskets aboard, and started off—expecten it was the sea-serpent, or an old maremaid. They wouldn't believe it was a man, until he'd told 'em all about it, and then they didn't hardly believe it nuther; and they cut him out o' the ice and tuk him aboard their vessel, and rubbed his legs with ile o' vitrol; but it was a long time afore they come to."

"Didn't they hurt him badly in cutting him out, Venus?"

"No, Sir, I believe not; not so bad as one might s'pose: for you see he'd been stuck in so long, that the circulaten on his blood had kind o' rotted the ice that was right next to him, and when they begun to cut, it crack'd off putty smart and easy, and he come out whole like a hard biled egg."

"What became of the bear?"

"Can't say as to that, what became o' him. He went off to sea somewheres, I expect. I should like to know, myself, how the varment got along right well, for it was kind in him to let the captin have the biggest haaf o' the seal, anyhow. That's all, boys. How many's asleep?"

XLVI.

THE BEST-NATURED MAN IN THE WORLD.

A YIELDING temper, when not carefully watched and curbed, is one of the most dangerous of faults. Like unregulated generosity, it is apt to carry its owner into a thousand difficulties, and, too frequently, to hurry him into vice, if not into crimes. But as it is of advantage to others while inflicting injury upon its possessor, it has, by the common consent of mankind, received a fine name, which covers its follies and promotes its growth. This easiness of disposition, which is a compound of indolence, vanity, and irresolution, is known and applauded as "good-nature;" and, to have reached the superlative degree, so as to be called the "best-natured fellow in the world—almost too good-natured for his own good," is regarded as a lofty merit.

The "best-natured fellow in the world" is merely a conve-

nience; very useful to others, but worse than useless to himself. He is the bridge across the brook, and men walk over him. He is the wandering pony of the Pampas, seeking his own provider, yet ridden by those who contribute not to his support. He giveth up all the sunshine, and hath nothing but chilling shade for himself. He waiteth at the table of the world, serveth the guests, who clear the board, and, for food and pay, give him fine words, which culinary research hath long since ascertained cannot be used with profit, even in the buttering of parsnips. He is, in fact, an appendage, not an individuality; and when worn out, as he soon must be, is thrown aside to make room for another, if another can be had. Such is the result of excessive compliance and obsequious good-nature. It plundereth a man of his spine, and converteth him into a flexile willow, to be bent and twisted as his companions choose, and, should it please them, to be wreathed into a fish-basket.

Are there any who doubt of this? Let them inquire for one Leniter Salix, and ask his opinion. Leniter may be ragged, but his philosophy has not so many holes in it as might be inferred from the state of his wardrobe. Nay, it is the more perfect on that account; a knowledge of the world penetrates the more easily when, from defective apparel, we approach the nearer to our original selves. Leniter's hat is crownless, and the clear light of knowledge streams without impediment upon his brain. He is not bound up in the strait jacket of prejudice, for he long since pawned his solitary vest, and his coat, made for a Goliath, hangs about him as loosely as a politician's principles, or as the pursuer's shirt in the poetical comparison. Salix has so long bumped his head against a stone wall, that he has knocked a hole in it, and like Cooke, the tragedian, sees through his error. He has speculated as extensively in experience as if it were town lots. The quantity of that article he has purchased, could it be made tangible, would freight a seventy-four;—were it convertible into cash, Cræsus would be a Chelsea pensioner to Salix. But unluckily for him, there are stages in life when experience itself is more ornamental than useful. When, to use a forcible expression—when a man is “done,”—it matters not whether he has as much experience as Samson had hair, or as Bergami had whisker—he can do no more. Salix has been in his time so much pestered with *duns*, “hateful to gods and men,” that he is *done* himself.

“The sun was rushing down the west,” as Banim has it, attending to its own business, and, by that means, shedding benefit upon the world, when Leniter Salix was seen in front of a little grocery, the *locale* of which shall be nameless, sitting de-

jectedly upon a keg of mackerel, number 2. He had been "the best-natured fellow in the world," but, as the geologists say, he was in a state of transition, and was rapidly becoming up to *trap*. At all events, he had his nose to the grindstone, an operation which should make men keen. He was houseless, homeless, penniless, and the grocery man had asked him to keep an eye upon the dog, for fear of the midsummer catastrophe which awaits such animals when their snouts are not in a bird-cage. This service was to be recompensed with a cracker, and a glass of what the shopman was pleased to call *racky mirac-ilis*, a fluid sometimes termed "railroad," from the rapidity with which it hurries men to the end of their journey. Like many of the best-natured fellows in the world, Salix, by way of being a capital companion, and of not being different from others, had acquired rather a partiality for riding on this "railroad," and he agreed to keep his trigger eye on the dog.

"That's right, Salix. I always knew you were the best-natured fellow in the world."

"H-u-m-p-s-e!" sighed Salix, in a prolonged, plaintive, uncertain manner, as if he admitted the fact, but doubted the honour; "h-u-m-p-s-e! but, if it wasn't for the railroad, which is good for my complaint, because I take it internally to drive out the perspiration, I've a sort of a notion Carlo might take care of himself. There's the dog playing about without his muzzle, just because I'm good-natured; there's Timpkins at work making money inside, instead of watching his own whelp, just because I'm good-natured; and I'm to sit here doing nothing instead of going to get a little job a man promised me down town, just because I'm good-natured. I can't see exactly what's the use of it to me. It's pretty much like having a bed of your own, and letting other people sleep in it, soft, while you sleep on the bare floor, hard. It wouldn't be so bad if you could have half, or quarter of the bed; but no—these good friends of mine, as I may say, turn in, take it all, roll themselves up in the kivering, and won't let us have a bit of sheet to mollify the white pine sacking bottom, the which is pleasant to whittle with a sharp knife—quite soft enough for that purpose—but the which is not the pink of feather-beds. I don't like it—I'm getting tired."

The brow of Salix began to blacken—therein having decidedly the advantage of his boots, which could neither blacken themselves, nor prevail on their master to do it—when Mrs Timpkins, the shopman's wife, popped out with a child in her arms, and three more trapesing after her.

"Law, Salix, how-dee-doo? I'm so glad—I know you're

the best-natured creature in the world. Jist hold little Biddy a while, and keep an eye on t'other young 'uns—you're such a nurse—he! he! he!—so busy—ain't go no girl—so busy washing—most tea time—he! he! he! Salix."

Mrs Timpkins disappeared, Biddy remained in the arms of Salix, and "t'other young 'uns" raced about with the dog. The trigger eye was compelled to invoke the aid of its coadjutor.

"Whew!" whistled Salix; "the quantity of pork they give in this part of the town for a shilling is amazin'—I'm so good-natured! That railroad will be well earnt anyhow. I'm beginning to think it's queer there ain't more good-natured people about besides me—I'm a sort of mayor and corporation all myself in this business. It's a monopoly where the profit's all loss. Now, for instance, these Timpkinses won't ask me to tea, because I'm ragged; but they ar'n't a bit too proud to ask me to play child's nurse and dog's uncle—they won't lend me any money, because I can't pay, and they're persimmony and sour about cash concerns—and they won't let me have time to earn any money, and get good clothes—that's because I'm so good-natured. I've a good mind to strike, and be sassy."

"Hallo! Salix, my good fellow!" said a man, on a horse, as he rode up; "you're the very chap I'm looking for. As I says to my old woman, says I, Leniter Salix is the wholesoul'dest chap I ever did see. There's nothing he won't do for a friend, and I'll never forget him, if I was to live as old as Methuselah."

Salix smiled—Hannibal softened rocks with vinegar, but the stranger melted the ice of our hero's resolution with praise. Salix walked towards him, holding the child with one hand as he extended the other for a friendly shake.

"You're the best-natured fellow in the world, Salix," ejaculated the stranger, as he leaped from the saddle, and hung the reins upon Salix's extended fingers, instead of shaking hands with him; "you're the best-natured fellow in the world. Just hold my horse a minute. I'll be back in a jiffy, Salix; in less than half an hour," said the dismounted rider, as he shot round the corner.

"If that ain't cutting it fat, I'll be darned!" growled Salix, as soon as he had recovered from his breathless amazement, and had gazed from dog to babe—from horse to children.

"Mr Salix," screamed Miss Tabitha Gadabout from the next house, "I'm just running over to Timpson's place. Keep an eye on my street door—back in a minute."

She flew across the street, and as she went, the words "best-natured soul alive" were heard upon the breeze.

"That's considerable fatter — it's as fat as show beef," said Salix. "How many eyes has a good-natured fellow got, anyhow? Three of mine's in use a'ready. The good-natureder you are, the more eyes you have, I s'pose. That job up town's jobbed without me, and where I'm to sleep, or to eat my supper, it's not the easiest thing in the world to tell. Ain't paid my board this six months, I'm so good-natured; and the old woman's so good-natured, she said I needn't come back. These Timpkinses and all of 'em are ready enough at asking me to do things, but when I ask them—There, that dog's off, and the ketchers are coming—Carlo! Carlo!"

The baby began squalling, and the horse grew restive, the dog scampered into the very teeth of danger; and the three little Timpkinses, who could locomote, went scrabbling, in different directions, into all sorts of mischief, until finally one of them pitched head foremost into a cellar.

Salix grew furious.

"Whoa, pony!—hush, you infernal brat!—here, Carlo!—Thunder and crockery!—there's a young Timpkins smashed and spoilt!—knocked into a cocked hat!"

"Mr Salix!" shouted a boy, from the other side of the way, "when you're done that 'ere, mammy says if you won't go a little narrant for her, you're so good-nater'd."

There are moments when calamity nerves us; when wild frenzy congeals into calm resolve; as one may see by penning a cat in a corner. It is then that the coward fights; that the oppressed strikes at the life of the oppressor. That moment had come to Salix. He stood bolt upright, as cold and as straight as an icicle. His good-nature might be seen to drop from him in two pieces, like Cinderella's kitchen garments in the opera. He laid Biddy Timpkins on the top of the barrel, released the horse, giving him a vigorous kick, which sent him flying down the street, and strode indignantly away, leaving Carlo, Miss Gadabout's house, and all other matters in his charge, to the guardianship of chance.

* * * * *

The last time Salix was seen in the busy haunts of men, he looked the very incarnation of gloom and despair. His very coat had gone to relieve his necessities, and he wandered slowly and dejectedly about, relieving the workings of his perturbed spirit by kicking whatever fell in his way.

"I'm done," soliloquized he; "pardenership between me and good-nature is this day dissolved, and all persons indebted will please to settle with the undersigned, who alone is authorized. Yes, there's a good many indebted, and it's high

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time to dissolve, when your pardener has sold all the goods and spent all the money. Once I had a little shop—ah! wasn't it nice?—plenty of goods and plenty of business. But then comes one troop of fellows, and they wanted tick—I'm so good-natured; then comes another set of chaps, who didn't let bashfulness stand in their way a minute; they sailed a good deal nearer the wind, and wanted to borry money—I'm so good-natured; and more asked me to go security. These fellows were always very particular friends of mine, and got what they asked for; but I was a very particular friend of theirs, and couldn't get it back. It was one of the good rules that won't work both ways; and I, somehow or other, was at the wrong end of it, for it wouldn't work my way at all. There's few rules that will, barring subtraction, and division, and alligation, when our folks allegated against me that I wouldn't come to no good. All the cypherin' I could ever do made more come to little, and little come to less; and yet, as I said afore, I had a good many assistants too.

"Business kept pretty fair; but I wasn't cured. Because I was good-natured, I had to go with 'em frolicking, tea-partying, excursioning, and busting; and for the same reason, I was always appinted treasurer to make the distribution when there wasn't a cent of surplus revenue in the treasury but my own. It was my job to pay all the bills. Yes, it was always 'Salix, you know me'—'Salix, pony up at the bar, and lend us a levy'—'Salix always shells out like a gentleman' Oh, to be sure! and why not?—now I'm shelled out myself—first out of my shop by old *venditioni exponas*, at the State House—old *fiery fash 'us* to me directed. But they didn't direct him soon enough, for he only got the fixtures. The goods had gone out on a bust long before I busted. Next I was shelled out of my boarding house; and now," (with a lugubrious glance at his shirt and pantaloons,) "I'm nearly shelled out of my clothes. It's a good thing they can't easy shell me out of my skin, or t'ey would, and let me catch my death of cold. I'm a mere shell-fish—an oyster with the kivers off.

"But it was always so—when I was a little boy they coaxed all my pennies out of me; coaxed me to take all the jawings, and all the hidings, and to go first into all sorts of scrapes, and precious scrapings they used to be. I wonder if there isn't two kinds of people—one kind that's made to chaw up t'other kind, and t'other kind that's made to be chawed up by one kind?—cat-kind of people, and mouse-kind of people? I guess there is. I'm very much of a mouse myself.

"What I want to know is, what's to become of me. I've

spent all I had in getting my eddication. Learnin', they say, is better than houses and lands. I wonder if anybody will swap some house and land with me for mine? I'd go it even, and ask no boot. They should have it at prime cost; but they won't; and I begin to be afraid I'll have to get married or 'list in the marines. That's what most people do when they've nothing to do."

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What became of Leniter Salix immediately is immaterial; what will become of him eventually is clear enough. His story is one acting every day, and, though grotesquely sketched, is an evidence of the danger of an accommodating disposition when not regulated by prudence. The softness of "the best-natured fellow in the world" requires a large admixture of hardening alloy to give it the proper temper.

XLVII.

CHUNKEY'S FIGHT WITH THE PANTHERS.

Co Chunk! went Jem into the middle of the floor; jest at the crack off day (Jem is a labor-savin' man about ondressing when he goes to bed). He commenced chunkin' the fire, then "ah!" says he, feelin' for the tin cup. Presently he went to the door, and shouted to the foreman:

"Sound that horn, Hembry. Tell the niggars in the quarter to lumber the hollar back agin to the kitchen, for a hurricane has surely broke loose!"

Then "ah!" says he again, and in he comes.

"Chunky!" says he

"What's busted, Jem?"

"North pole has busted, and no mistake. The ground is kivered with snow."

I sprung up, and sure enough thar was the snow, the first that ever fell in the creek, jest follerin' civilization. I knowed thar'd be howlin', smashin' of teeth, burnin' of brimstone, and a worryin' of the stranger, on the creek to-day, and so, I reckon, did the dogs, 'cause when Hembry blowed the horn, they come a ehoutin' like so many imps. Jest imagin, Captin, thirty full-grown dogs, a cross of the blood on the old Virginny foxhound, keen as a bowyer, and adzactly of Jem's opinion, signifying as plain as they could, if huntin's goin' on, they'd take a chance.

Well, we splurged about till breakfast-time, gettin' up and cleanin' guns, and countin' balls, and dividin' powder.

"Bring out them bar-sassage and deer melts," says Jem; "and then, Chunkey, we'll locomotion."

"His eyes all the time lookin' like a live coal of fire, and every muscle jumpin' for joy.

"Look out, bar," says he.

"Say low, and keep dark, panter," says I.

"Deer, don't you come nigh me," says Jem, and then he commenced singin' :

"Oh, rain come wet me, sun come dry me,
Take care, white man, don't come nigh me,"

and strikin' a few flourishes of the goin' and comin' double shuffle.

"Hurrah for Sky Lake," says I.

"Hurrah for the Forkin' Cypress drive," says Jem, takin' a drink, and cuttin' a few pigeon-wings with his left leg. "Now mind, Chunkey, no deer or wild turkey, no hogs or cub—nothin' but bar or panter."

"Agreed," says I, and then we budged.

Captin, you've hearn Jem say, he's hard of hearin'? Well, he is sometimes, 'specially when he don't want to hear; but that mornin' he was wide awake all over, and could have hearn an old he bar grunt in a thunder-storm.

"I'll carry the horn, Chunkey. If you blow, I can't hear you; and when I want you, I'll blow, and you can."

I didn't 'spect anything then, but you'll see.

Well, we had our big guns, them the govenor gin us; they throw twelve to the pound, and war made by that man what lives in Louisville; what's his name?

He promised to send me a deer-gun gratis for two young panthers, but he ain't done it.

Jem's gun war in bar order that mornin', and if you'd jest say varment above your breath, click it would go, cockin' itself.

Lots of deer war 'tinually passin'; that day some on 'em stood feedin' jist as careless as a loafer with a full belly; they kno'ed they war safe. The day was mighty clear and yaller; it warn't very cold, but still the snow diddent melt, but floated sorter like turkey-feathers in the wind, and in the tall cane it fell round us like a fog.

When we got to the Forkin' Cypress, Sol soon had a camp made; and I and Jem started to look for sign.

We hadn't been gone long, when I hearn Jem's horn, and made to him; thar war a sign at the foot of a tree, and thar war his track in the snow.

"Shall we nail him, Chunkey?"

"In course," says I.

Well, we hollered to Sol to let the dogs loose. Presently I hearn 'em give some short licks, and I knowed he war up.

"Thar's a cry for you."

Away they go further and further, presently you can jest hear 'em, and then they are clean gone. I hearn Jem shoutin' awhile, and then his mouth is lost too. I started on, spectin' to meet 'em comin' back, and in about an 'our I hearn Jem's voice:

"Who-whoop!"

"Ah, bar!" says I, "whar's your friends?"

I soon hearn Jem agin, and presently I hearn the dogs, like the ringin' of a cow-bell, a long way off. They come up the ridge, and then bore off to the thick cane on my right. Then they hushed awhile, and I knoed they's a fightin'.

Look out, dogs; thar, they are gwyine again—no, here they comes! Lay low, and keep dark.

I put down another ball, and stood for him. I hearn the cane crackin', and cocked my gun. Here he comes—here he is. I hear him snortin', wake snakes. Ain't that lumberin'? Thar, they've got him again, and now the fur flies. I crawled thro' the cane, trying to get a shot afore the dogs seen me. Thar they is, but which is he?

Bang! whiff, whiff, said the bar, and with that every dog jumped him. The canes a crackin', and the dogs a hollerin'. I jerked my bowyer and plunged in, and thar they war hung together like a swarm of bees. I felt the har risin' on my head, and the blood ticklin' the end of my fingers. I crept up behind him and he war done fightin'. He haddent got a hundred yards from the place whar I'd shot him. It war a death shot, and blinded him, and thar side of him lay "Singer" and "Constitutional," two of the best dogs in Jem's pack. I giv a shout, and Jem answered. Presently I hearn him cummin', blowin' like a steam-boat, and mad as anything; he always gits mad when he's tired, and when he seen them dead dogs, he commenced breathin' mighty hard, and the veins in his neck was as big as fingers; we warn't more than a quarter and a half from the camp, whar we soon got, both mighty hungry and tired. Sol cooked the liver jest to the right pint, and we spent the balance of the evenin' in singin', braggin', and eatin' sparribs roasted brown, till we went to sleep.

Next mornin' when we waked it was sorter cloudy and warm too. The wind war blowin' mightily.

"Now, Chunkey, let's have a panter to day, or nothin'."

"All *so*," says I.

Well, arter breakfast Jem says, "Chunkey, you must take the right side the Lake, and I'll take the 'yether, till we meet—and, Chunkey, you must *rush*; it ain't more nor eight miles round, but your side *may* seem long, as you ain't usen to the ground. Let's lick'er out of *my* gourd, you ain't got more nor you'll want. Keep your eye skinned for sign, and listen for my horn!"

"Hump yourself," says I, and we both darted—*well*; I worked my passage through cane, palmetto, and vines, until I war tired—I haddent hearn Jem's horn, and pushed on the harder to meet him; every once and a while I'd think *hears the turn of the Lake*, but when I'd git to the place, *thar it was* stretchin' out as big as ever. Once I thought I hearn Jem's horn, but couldnt quite make it out. I kept movin'; hours passed and no Jem or end of the Lake; I'd seen lots of bar and panter sign, lots of deer, and more swan, wild-goose, and duck, than you ever will see; but I paid no attention to 'em, as I 'spected I'd taken some wrong arm of the Lake and war lost. It war gettin' towards night, and I 'spected I'd have to sleep by myself, but you know I diddnt mind that, as I war used to it. But it war the first time in my life that I'd bin lost, and that *did* pester me mightily. Well, Sir, after studyin' awhile, I thought I'd better put back towards the camp, mighty tired and discouraged. I then throw'd my gourd round to take a drop of liker, and it were *filled with water*! fact!—Thinks I, Chunkey, you must have been *mighty* drunk last night; that made me sorter low-spirited like a 'oman, and my heart war weak as water. It had commenced gittin' sorter dark; the wind were blowin' and groanin' through the trees and rivers, and the black clouds were flyin', and I war goin' along sorter oneasy and cross-grained, when *a panter yelled out, close to me*! I turned with my gun cocked, but couldnt see it; presently I hearn it again, and out it come, and then another! "Is that you?" said I, takin' a crack and missin' to a sartainty; and away they darted through the cane. I drap'd my gun to load, and by the great Jackson, there warn't a full load of powder in my gourd!—I loaded *mighty* carefully, and started on to pick out some holler tree to sleep in. Every once and awhile I'd git a glimpse of the panthers on my trail. "Panthers," says I, "I'll make a child's bargain with you; if you will let *me* alone, *you may go long*;—and if you don't, here's a ball into the head of one of ye'er, and this knife!"—*hush*, if my knife warn't gone, I wish I may never taste bar's meat? I raised my arm, trim-

blin' like a leaf, and says I, "Jem!—*I'll have your melt!*" Well, I war in trouble sure!—I thought I war on the *Tchule a Leta Lake*, and witched.

Well I did! Oh, you may larph, but jist imagin' *yourself* lost in the cane on Sky Lake, (the cane on Sky Lake is *some*—thirty miles long, from one to three miles wide, thick as the har on a dog's back, and about thirty feet high!) out of licker, out of powder, your knife gone, the ground kivered with snow, you very hungry and tired, and *two panthers follerin' your trail*, and you'd think you was bewitched too!

Well, here they come, never lettin' on, but makin' arrangements to have my skalp that night; I never lettin' on, but detarmin'd they shouldnt. The har had been standin' on my head for more nor an hour, and the sweat were gist *rollin'* off me, and that satisfied me a fight war a brewin' atween me and the panthers! I stopped two or three times, thinkin' they's gone, but presently hear they'd come, creepin' along through the cane, and soon as they'd see me they stop, lay down, roll over and twirl their tails about like kittens playin'; I'd then shout, shake the cane, and away they'd go. Oh, they thought they had me! *In course they did*, and I detarmined with myself, if they *did let me go*, if they diddent attack an onarmed man, alone and lost, without licker, dogs, powder, or knife, that the very fust time I got a panter up a tree, with my whole pack at the root, my licker gourd full, and I half full, my twelve-to-the-pound-yager loaded, and my knife in shavin' der, I'd let him go! Yes, *'tisn't Chantrey if I diddent!*

But what did *they* care? They'd no more feelin' than a pine-stump! I know'd it woulddent do to risk a fight in the cane, and pushed on to find an open place whar I could make sure of my one load, and rely on my gun barrel arter. I soon found a place whar the cane drifted, and *thar* I determined to stand and fight it out! Presently here they come; and if a stranger had seen 'em, he'd a thought they were playin'! They'd jump and squat, and bend their backs, lay down and roll, and grin like puppys;—*they kept gittin' nearer and nearer*, and it wer gettin' dark, and I know'd I must let drive at the old *he*, 'afore it got so dark I couldnt see my sights; so I jist dropped on one knee to make sure, and when I raised my gun, I were all in a trimble! I know'd *that* woulddent do, and *ris!*

"You are witched, Chunkey, sure and sartin'," said I. Arter bracin' myself, I raised up agin and *fired!* One on 'em sprung into the air and gin a yell, and the other bounded towards me like a streak! Lightin' close to me, it squatted to

the ground and commenced creepin' towards me—its years laid back, its eyes turnin' green, and sorter swimmin' round like, and the end of its tail twistin' like a snake. I felt light as a cork, and strong as a buffalo. I seen her commence slippin' her legs under her, and knew she were gwine to spring. I throw'd back my gun to gin it to her, as she come; the lick I aimed at her head struck across the shoulders and back without doing any harm, *and she had me!*—Rip, rip, rip—and 'way went my blanket, coat, and britches. She sunk her teeth into my shoulder, her green eyes were close to mine, and the froth from her mouth were flyin' in my face!! *Moses!* how fast she *did* fight! I felt the warm blood runnin' down my side—I seen she were arter *my* throat! and with that I grabbed *hern*, and commenced pourin' it into her side with my fist, like cats-a-fightin'!—Rip, rip, she'd take me,—diff, slam, bang, I'd gin it to her—she fightin' for her *supper*, I fightin' for my *life!* Why, in course it war an onequal fight, but she ris it! Well, we had it round and round, sometimes one, and then yother on top, she a growlin' and I a gruntin'! We had both commenced gittin' mighty tired, and presently she made a spring, *tryin' to git away!* Arter *that* thar wan't no mortal chance for her! Cause why, she were whipped! I'd sorter been thinkin' about sayin'

"Now I lay me down to sleep,"

but I know'd if I commenced it would put her in heart, and she'd riddle me in a minit, and when *she* hollered *nuff*, I were glad to my shoe soles, and had sich confidence in whippin' the fight, that *I offered two to one on Chunkey*, but no takers!

"Oh, ho!" says I, a hittin' her a lick every time I spoke, "you are willin' to quit even and divide stakes, are you?" and then round and round we went agin! You could have hearn us blow a quarter, but presently she made a *big struggle* and broke my hold! I fell one way, and she the other! She darted into the cane, and that's the last time I ever hearn of *that* panter!!!

When I sorter come to myself, I war struttin' and *thunderin'* like a big he-gobler, and then I commenced examinin' to see what harin she'd done me; I war bit powerful bad in the shoulder and arm—*jist look at them scars!*—and I were cut into solid whip-strings; but when I found thar warn't no danger of its *killin'* me, I set in to braggin'. "Oh, you ain't dead yet, Chunkey!" says I, "if you are sorter wasted, and have whipped a panter in a fair fight, and *no gougins*;" and then I *cock a doodle dood* a spell, for joy!

When I looked round, *thar* sot the old he, a lickin' the blood from his breast! I'd shot him right through the breast, but sorter slantindickler, breakin' his shoulder blade in a perfect smash. I walked up to him:

"Howdy, panter? how do you do? how *is* misses panter, and the little panter? how is your consarns in gineral? Did you ever hearn tell of the man they calls 'Chunkey?' born in Kaintuck and raised in Mississippi? death on a bar, and *smartly* in a panter fight? If you diddnt, look, for *I'm he!* I kills bars, whips panter in a fair fight; I walks the water, I out-bellars the thunder, and when I gets hot the Mississippi hides itself! I—I—Oh, you thought you *had* me, did you?—*drot you!* But *you* are a gone sucker now. I'll have your melt, if I never gits home, so—

"Look out, Capting! here's the place! make the skift fast to that cyprus log. Take care them oars, Abe! Spring out and oncupple the dogs, and take car they don't knock them guns overboard. Now, Capting, we will have a deer movin' afore you can say—Chunkey."

XLVIII.

A BULLY BOAT, AND A BRAG CAPTAIN.

A STORY OF STEAM-BOAT LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

Does any one remember the 'Caravan?' She was what would now be considered a slow boat; *then* (1827) she was regularly advertised as the "fast-running," &c. Her regular trips from New Orleans to Natchez were usually made in from six to eight days; a trip made by her in five days was considered remarkable. A voyage from New Orleans to Vicksburg and back, including stoppages, generally entitled the officers and crew to a month's wages. Whether the 'Caravan' ever achieved the feat of a voyage to the Falls (Louisville), I have never learned; if she did, she must have "had a time of it!"

It was my fate to take passage in this boat. The captain was a good-natured, easy-going man, careful of the comfort of his passengers, and exceedingly fond of the *game of brag*. We had been out a little more than five days, and we were in hopes of seeing the bluffs of Natchez on the next day. Our wood was getting low, and night coming on. The pilot on duty *above* (the

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other pilot held three aces at the time, and was just calling out the captain, who "went it strong" on three kings) sent down word that the mate had reported the stock of wood reduced to half a cord. The worthy captain excused himself to the pilot, whose watch was *below*, and the two passengers who made up the party, and hurried to the deck, where he soon discovered, by the landmarks, that we were about half a mile from a wood-yard, which he said was situated "right round yonder point."

"But," muttered the captain, "I don't much like to take wood of the yellow-faced old scoundrel who owns it; he always charges a quarter of a dollar more than any one else; however, there's no other chance."

The boat was pushed to her utmost, and, in a little less than an hour, when our fuel was about giving out, we made the point, and our cables were out and fastened to trees, alongside of a good-sized wood-pile.

"Hollo, Colonel! how d'yo sell your wood *this* time?"

A yellow-faced old gentleman, with a two-weeks' beard, strings over his shoulders holding up to his arm-pits a pair of copperas-coloured, linsey-woolsey pants, the legs of which reached a very little below the knee, shoes without stockings, a faded, broad-brimmed hat, which had once been black, and a pipe in his mouth, casting a glance at the empty guards of our boat, and uttering a grunt as she rose from fastening our "spring-line," answered:

"Why, Capting, we must charge you *three and a quarter this time*."

"The d—l!" replied the Captain, (captains did swear a little in those days); "what's the odd *quarter* for, I should like to know? You only charged me *three* as I went down."

"Why, Capting," drawled out the wood-mercant, with a sort of leer on his yellow countenance, which clearly indicated that his wood was as good as sold, "wood's riz since you went down two weeks ago; besides you are awar' that you very seldom stop going *down*; when you're going *up*, you're sometimes obleeged to give me a call, becaze the current's against you, and there's no other wood-yard for nine miles ahead; and if you happen to be nearly out of fooel, why—"

"Well, well," interrupted the Captain, "we'll take a few cords, under the circumstances," and he returned to his game of brag.

In about half an hour, we felt the 'Caravan' commence paddling again. Supper was over, and I retired to my upper berth, situated alongside, and overlooking the brag-table, where the Captain was deeply engaged, having now the *other* pilot as

his principal opponent. We jogged on quietly, and seemed to be going at a good rate.

"How does the wood burn?" inquired the Captain of the mate, who was looking on at the game.

"'Tisn't of much account, I reckon," answered the mate; "it's cotton-wood, and most of it green at that—"

"Well, Thompson—(three aces again, stranger. I'll take that X and the small change, if you please—it's your deal)—Thompson, I say, we'd better take three or four cords at the next wood-yard; it can't be more than six miles from here; (two aces and a bragger, with the ace! hand over those Vs.)"

The game went on, and the paddles kept moving. At eleven o'clock it was reported to the Captain that we were nearing the wood-yard, the light being distinctly seen by the pilot on duty.

"Head her in shore, then, and take in six cords, if it's good. See to it, Thompson; I can't very well leave the game now; it's getting right warm! This pilot's beating us all to smash."

The wooding completed, we paddled on again. The Captain seemed somewhat vexed when the mate informed him that the price was the same as at the last wood-yard, *three and a quarter*; but soon again became interested in the game.

From my upper berth (there was no state-rooms *then*) I could observe the movements of the players. All the contention appeared to be between the captain and the pilots (the latter personages took it turn and turn about, steering and playing brag), one of them almost invariably winning, while the two passengers merely went through the ceremony of dealing, cutting, and paying up their "antics." They were anxious to *learn the game*—and they did learn it! Once in a while, indeed, seeing they had two aces and a bragger, they would venture a bet of five or ten dollars; but they were always compelled to back out before the tremendous bragging of the captain or pilot; or if they *did* venture to "call out" on "two bullits and a bragger," they had the mortification to find one of the officers had the same kind of a hand, and were *more venerable*! Still, with all these disadvantages, they continued playing—they wanted to learn the game.

At two o'clock the Captain asked the mate how we were getting on.

"Oh, pretty glibly, Sir!" replied the mate; "we can scarcely tell what headway we *are* making, for we are obliged to keep the middle of the river, and there is the shadow of a fog rising. This wood seems rather better than that we took in at old yellow-face's, but we're nearly out again, and must

be looking for more. I saw a light just ahead on the right—shall we hail?”

“Yes, yes,” replied the Captain; “ring the bell, and ask ‘em what’s the price of wood up here. I’ve got you again; here’s double kings.”

I heard the bell and the pilot’s hail:

“What’s *your* price for wood?”

A youthful voice on the shore answered:

“Three *and* a quarter!”

“Hollo!” ejaculated the Captain, who had just lost the price of two cords to the pilot, the strangers suffering *some* at the same time, “three and a quarter again! Are we *never* to get to a cheaper country? Deal, Sir, if you please—better luck next time.”

The other pilot’s voice was again heard on deck:

“How much *have* you?”

“Only about ten cords, Sir,” was the reply of the youthful salesman.

The Captain here told Thompson to take six cords, which would last till daylight, and again turned his attention to the game.

The pilots here changed places. *When did they sleep?* Wood taken in, the ‘Caravan’ again took her place in the middle of the stream, paddling *as* usual. Day at length dawned, the brag-party broke up, and settlements were being made, during which operation the Captain’s bragging propensities were exercised in cracking up the speed of his boat, which, by his reckoning, must have made at least sixty miles, and would have made many more if he could have procured good wood. It appears the two passengers, in their first lesson, had incidentally lost one hundred and twenty dollars. The Captain, as he rose to see about taking in some *good* wood, which he felt sure of obtaining, now he had got above the level country, winked at his opponent, the pilot, with whom he had been on very bad terms during the progress of the game, and said, in an under tone,

“Forty a-piece for you, and I, and James (the other pilot) is not bad for one night.”

I had risen, and went out with the Captain, to enjoy a view of the bluffs. There was just fog enough to prevent the vision taking in more than sixty yards, so I was disappointed in *my* expectation. We were nearing the shore for the purpose of looking for wood, the banks being invisible from the middle of the river.

“There it is!” exclaimed the Captain; “stop her!”

Ding, ding, ding! went the big bell, and the Captain hailed:

"Hollo! the wood-yard!"

"Hollo, yourself!" answered a squeaking female voice, which came from a woman with a petticoat over her shoulders in place of a shawl.

"What's the price of wood?"

"I think you ought to know the price by this time," answered the old lady in the petticoat; "it's three and a qua-r-ter! and now you know it."

"Three and the d—l!" broke in the Captain; "what, nave you raised on *your* wood too? I'll give you three, and not a cent more."

"Well," replied the petticoat, "here comes the old man; *he'll* talk to you."

And, sure enough, out crept from the cottage the veritable faded hat, copperas-coloured pants, yellow countenance, and two weeks' beard we had seen the night before, and the same voice we had heard regulating the price of cotton-wood, squeaked out the following sentence, accompanied by the same leer of the same yellow countenance:

"Why, darn it all, Capting! there is but three or four cords left, and *since it's you*, I don't care if I *do* let you have it for *three, as you're a good customer!*"

After a quick glance at the landmarks around, the Captain bolted, and turned in to take some rest. The fact became apparent: the reader will probably have discovered it some time since, *that we had been wooding all night at the same wood-yard!*

XLIX.

FYDGET FIXINGTON.

THE doctrine, that "all is for the best," though cherished in the abstract, is but little practised. The world is much more addicted to its opposite. "All's for the worst" is a very common motto, and under its influence there are thousands who growl when they go to bed, and growl still louder when they get up; they growl at their breakfast, they growl at their dinner, they growl at their supper, and they growl between meals. Discontent is written in every feature of their visage; and they

go on from the beginning of life until its close, always growling, in the hope of making things better by scaring them into it with ugly noises.

The active grumbletonians are a very different race of mortals from the passives. The world is largely indebted to them for every comfort and convenience with which it abounds; and they laugh at the inquiry whether their exertions have conduced to the general happiness, holding it that happiness consists chiefly in exertion—to which the passives demur, as they look back with no little regret to the lazy days of pastoral life, when Chaldean shepherds lounged upon the grass. The actives are very much inclined to believe that whatever is, is wrong; but then they have as an offset the comfortable conviction that they are able to set it right—an opinion which fire cannot melt out of them. These restless fellows are in a vast majority; and hence it is that the surface of this earthly sphere is such a scene of activity; hence it is that for so many thousand years, the greater part of each generation has been unceasingly employed in labour and bustle; rushing from place to place; hammering, sawing, and driving; hewing down and piling up mountains; and unappalled, meeting disease and death, both by sea and land.

The passive grumbletonian is useless to himself and to others: the active grumbletonian is just the reverse. In general, he combines individual advancement with public prosperity; but there are exceptions even in that class—men, who try to take so much care of the world that they forget themselves, and of course fail in their intent.

Such a man is Fydgēt Fyxington, an amelioration-of-the-human-race-by-starting-from-first-principles-philosopher. Fydgēt's abstract principle, particularly in matters of government and of morals, is doubtless a sound rule; but he looks so much at the beginning that he rarely arrives at the end, and when he advances at all, he marches backward, his face being directed towards the starting-place instead of the goal. By this means he may perhaps plough a straight furrow, but instead of curving round obstructions, he is very apt to be thrown down by them.

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Winter ruled the hour when Fydgēt Fyxington was last observed to be in circulation—winter, when men wear their hands in their pockets and seldom straighten their backs—a season however which, though sharp and biting in its temper, has redeeming traits. There is something peculiarly exhilarating in the sight of new-fallen snow. The storm which brings it is not without a charm. The graceful eddying of the drifts

sported with by the wind, and the silent gliding of the feathery flakes, as one by one they settle upon the earth like fairy creatures dropping to repose, have a soothing influence not easily described, though doubtless felt by all. But when the clouds, having performed their office, roll away, and the brightness of the morning sun beams upon an expanse of sparkling unsullied whiteness; when all that is common-place, coarse, and unpleasant in aspect, is veiled for the time, and made to wear a fresh and dazzling garb, new animation is felt by the spirit. The young grow riotous with joy, and their merry voices ring like bells through the clear and bracing air: while the remembrance of earlier days gives a youthful impulse to the aged heart.

But to all this there is a sad reverse. The resolution of these enchantments into their original elements by means of a thaw, is a necessary, but, it must be confessed, a very doleful process, fruitful in gloom, rheum, inflammations, and fevers—a process which gives additional pangs to the melancholic, and causes valour's self to droop like unstarched muslin.

Such a time was it when Fydgut was extant—a sloppy time in January. The city, it is true, was clothed in snow, rusty and forlorn in aspect, and weeping, as if in sorrow that its original purity had become soiled, stained, and spotted by contact with the world. Its whiteness had in a measure disappeared, by the pressure of human footsteps; wheels and runners had almost incorporated it with the common earth; and, where these had failed in effectually doing the work, remorseless distributors of ashes, coal dust, and potato peelings, had lent their aid to give uniformity to the dingy hue. But the snow, "weeping its spirit from its eyes," and its body too, was fast escaping from these multiplied oppressions and contumelies. Large and heavy drops splashed from the eaves; sluggish streams rolled lazily from the alleys, and the gutters and crossings formed vast shallow lakes, variegated by glaciers and ice islands. They who roamed abroad at this unpropitious time, could be heard approaching by the damp sucking sound which emanated from their boots, as they alternately pumped in and pumped out the water in their progress, and it was thus that our hero travelled, having no caoutchouc health-preservers to shield his pedals from unwholesome contact.

The shades of evening were beginning to thicken, when Fydgut stopped shiveringly and looked through the glass door of a fashionable hotel—the blazing fire and the numerous lights, by the force of contrast, made an outside seat still more uncomfortable.

The gong pealed out that tea was ready, and the lodgers

rushed from the stoves to comfort themselves with that exhilarating fluid.

"There they go on first principles," said Fydget Fyngton with a sigh.

"Ch' de kitchen da'," said one of those ultra-aristocratic members of society, a negro waiter, as he bustled past the contemplative philosopher and entered the hotel; "you ought to be gwang home to suppa', ole soul, if you got some—yaugh—waugh!"

"Suppa', you nigga'!" contemptuously responded Fydget, as the door closed, "I wish I was gwang home to suppa', but suppers are a sort of thing I remember a good deal offener than I see. Everything is wrong—such a wandering from first principles!—there must be enough in this world for us all, or we wouldn't be here; but things is fixed so badly that I s'pose some greedy rascal gets my share of suppa' and other such elegant luxuries. It's just the way of the world; there's plenty of shares of everything, but somehow or other there are folks that lay their fingers on two or three shares, and sometimes more, according as they get a chance, and the real owners, like me, may go whistle. They've fixed it so that if you go back to first principles and try to bone what belongs to you, they pack you right off to jail, 'cause you can't prove property. Empty stummicks and old clothes ain't good evidence in court.

"What the deuse is to become of me! Something must—and I wish it would be quick and hurra about it. My clothes are getting to be too much of the summer-house order for the winter fashions. People will soon see too much of me—not that I care much about looks myself, but boys is boys, and all boys is sassy. Since the weather's been chilly, when I turn the corner to go up town, I feel as if the house had too many windows and doors, and I'm almost blow'd out of my coat and pants. The fact is, I don't get enough to eat to serve for ballast."

After a melancholy pause, Fydget, seeing the coast tolerably clear, walked in to warm himself at the fire in the bar-room, near which he stood with great composure, at the same time emptying several glasses of comfortable compounds which had been left partly filled by the lodgers when they hurried to their tea. Lighting a cigar which he found half smoked upon the ledge of the stove, he seated himself and puffed away much at his ease.

The inmates of the hotel began to return to the room, glancing suspiciously at Fydget's tattered integuments, and

drawing their chairs away from him as they sat down near the stove. Fydet looked unconscious, emitting volumes of smoke, and knocking off the ashes with a nonchalant and scientific air.

"Bad weather," said Brown.

"I've noticed that the weather is frequently bad in winter, especially about the middle of it, and at both ends, added Green. "I keep a memorandum book on the subject, and can't be mistaken."

"It's raining now," said Griffinhoff, "what's the use of that when it's so wet under foot already?"

"It very frequently rains at the close of a thaw, and it's beneficial to the umbrella makers," responded Green.

"Nothin's fixed nohow," said Fydet, with great energy—for he was tired of listening.

Brown, Green, Griffinhoff, and the rest started and stared.

"Nothin's fixed nohow," continued Fydet, rejoicing in the fact of having hearers; "our granddads must a been lazy rascals. Why didn't they roof over the side walks, and not leave everything for us to do? I ain't got no numbrell, and besides that, when it comes down as if raining was no name for it, as it always does when I'm cotch'd out, numbrells is no great shakes if you've got one with you, and no shakes at all if it's at home."

"Who's the indeividual?" inquired Cameo Calliper, Esq., looking at Fydet through a pair of lorgnettes.

Fydet returned the glance by making an opera glass with each fist, and then continued his remarks; "It's a pity we ain't got feathers, so's to grow our own jacket and trousers, and do up the tailorin' business, and make our own feather-beds. It would be a great savin'—every man his own clothes, and every man his own feather-bed. Now I've got a suggestion about that—first principles bring us to the skin—fortify that, and the matter's done. How would it do to bile a big kittle full of tar, tallow, beeswax and injen rubber, with considerable wool, and dab the whole family once a week? The young 'uns might be soused in it every Saturday night, and the nigger might fix the elderly folks with a whitewash brush. Then there wouldn't be no bother a washing your clothes or yourself, which last is an invention of the doctor to make people sick, because it lets in the cold in winter and the heat in summer, when natur' says shut up the porouses and keep 'em out. Besides, when the new invention was tore at the knees or wore at the elbows, just tell the nigger to put on the kittle and give you a dab, and you're patched slick—and so that whole mobs of people

mightn't stick together like figs, a little sperrits of turpentine or litharage might be added to make 'em dry like a house-a-fire."

"If that fellow don't go away, I'll hurt him," said Griffinhoff *sotto voce*.

"Where's a waiter?" inquired Cameo Calliper, edging off in alarm.

"He's crazy," said Green. "I was at the hospital once, and there was a man in the place who—"

"'Twould be nice for sojers," added Fyxington, as he threw away his stump, and very deliberately reached over and helped himself to a fresh cigar, from a number which Mr Green had just brought from the bar and held in his hand—"I'll trouble you for a little of your fire," continued he, taking the cigar from the mouth of Mr Green, and after obtaining a light, again placing the borrowed Habana within the lips of that worthy individual, who sat stupified at the audacity of the supposed maniac. Fyidget gave the conventional grin of thanks peculiar to such occasions, and with a graceful wave of his hand, resumed the thread of his lecture: "'Twould be nice for sojers. Stand 'em all of a row, and whitewash 'em blue or red, according to pattern, as if they were a fence. The gin'als might look on to see if it was done according to Gunter; the cap'ins might flourish the brush, and the corpulars carry the bucket. Dandies could fix themselves all sorts of streaked and all sorts of colours. When the parterials is cheap and the making don't cost nothing, that's what I call economy, and coming as near as possible to first principles. It's a better way, too, of keeping out the rain, than my t'other plan of flogging people when they're young, to make their hides hard and waterproof. A good licking is a sound first principle for juveniles, but they've got a prejudice agin it."

"Waiter!" cried Cameo Calliper.

"Sa!"

"Remove the incumbent—expose him to the atmosphere!"

"If you hadn't said that, I'd wopped him," observed Griffinhoff.

"Accordin' to first principles, I've as good a right to be here as anybody," remarked Fyidget, indignantly.

"Cut you' stick, 'cumbent—take you'sef off, trash!" said the waiter, keeping at a respectful distance.

"Don't come near me, Sip," growled Fyidget, doubling his fist—"don't come near me, or I'll develope a first principle and 'lucidate a simple idea for you—I'll give you a touch of natur' without no gloves on—but I'll not stay, though I've a

clear right to do it, unless you are able—yes, sassy, able!—to put me out. If there is anything I scorns it's prejudice, and this room's so full of it and smoke together that I won't stay. Your cigar, Sir," added Fydgert, tossing the stump to Mr Green and retiring slowly.

"That fellow's brazen enough to collect militia fines," said Brown, "and so thin and bony, that if pasted over with white paper, and rigged athwart ships, he'd make a pretty good sign for an oyster cellar."

The rest of the company laughed nervously, as if not perfectly sure that Fydgert was out of hearing.

* * * * *

"The world's full of it—nothin' but prejudice. I'm always served the same way, and though I've so much to do planning the world's good I can't attend to my own business, it not only won't support me, but it treats me with despise and unbecoming freedery. Now, I was used sinful about my universal language, which everybody can understand, which makes no noise, and which don't convolve no wear and tear of the tongue. It's the patent anti-fatigue-anti-consumption omnibus linguister, to be done by winking and blinking, and cocking your eye, the way the cat-fishes make Fourth of July orations. I was going to have it introduced in Congress, to save the expense of anchovies and more porter; but t'other day I tried it on a feller in the street; I danced right up to him, and began canœuvering my daylight to ask him what o'clock it was, and I'm blowed if he didn't swear I was crazy, up fist and stop debate, by putting it to me right atween the eyes, so that I've been pretty well bung'd up about the peepers ever since, by a feller too who couldn't understand a simple idea. That was worse than the kick a feller gave me in market, because 'cording to first principles I put a bullowney sassinger into my pocket, and didn't pay for it. The 'riginal law, which you may see in children, says when you ain't got no money, the next best thing is to grab and run. I did grab and run, but he grabb'd me, and I had to trot back agin, which always hurts my feelin's and stops the march of mind. He wouldn't hear me 'lucidate the simple idea, and the way he hauled out the sassinger, and lent me the loan of his foot, was werry sewere. It was unsatisfactory and discombobberative, and made me wish I could find out the hurtin' principle and have it 'radicated."

Carriages were driving up to the door of a house brilliantly illuminated in one of the fashionable streets, and the music which pealed from within intimated that the merry dance was on foot.

"I'm goin' in," said Fydget—"I'm not afeard—if we go on first principles we ain't afeard of nothin', and since they've monopolized my sheer of fun, they can't do less than give me a shinplaster to go away. My jacket's so wet with the rain, if I don't get dry I'll be sewed up and have *his jacket* wrote atop of me, which means defuncted of toggery not imprevous to water. In I go."

In accordance with this design, he watched his opportunity and slipped quietly into the gay mansion. Helping himself liberally to refreshments left in the hall, he looked in upon the dancers.

"Who-o-ip!" shouted Fydget Fyxington, forgetting himself in the excitement of the scene—"Who-o-ip!" added he, as he danced forward with prodigious vigour and activity, flourishing the eatables with which his hands were crammed, as if they were a pair of cymbals—"Whurro-o-o! plank it down—that's your sort!—make yourselves merry, gals and boys—it's all accordin' to first principles—whoo-o-o-ya—whoop!—it takes us!"

Direful was the screaming at this formidable apparition—the fiddles ceased—the waltzers dropped their panting burdens, and the black band looked pale and aghast.

"Who-o-o-p! go ahead! come it strong!" continued Fydget.

But he was again doomed to suffer an ejection.

"Hustle him out!"

"Give us a 'shinplaster' then—them's my terms."

It would not do—he was compelled to retire shinplasterless; but it rained so heavily that, nothing daunted, he marched up the alley-way, re-entered the house through the garden, and gliding noiselessly into the cellar, turned a large barrel over which he found there, and getting into it, went fast asleep "on first principles."

The company had departed—the servants were assembled in the kitchen preparatory to retiring for the night, when an unearthly noise proceeding from the barrel aforesaid struck upon their astonished ears. It was Fydget snoring, and his hearers, screaming, fled.

Rallying, however, at the top of the stairs, they procured the aid of Mr Lynx, who watched over the nocturnal destinies of an unfinished building in the vicinity, and who, having frequently boasted of his valour, felt it to be a point of honour to act bravely on this occasion. The sounds continued, and the "investigating committee," with Mr Lynx as chairman, advanced slowly and with many pauses.

Lynx at last hurriedly thrust his club into the barrel, and started back to wait the result of the experiment.

"Ouch!" ejaculated a voice from the interior, the word being one not to be found in the dictionaries, but which, in common parlance, means that a sensation too acute to be agreeable has been excited.

"Hey!—hello!—come out of that," said Lynx, as soon as his nerves had recovered tranquillity. "You are in a bad box, whoever you are."

"Augh!" was the response, "no, I ain't—I'm in a barrel."

"No matter," added Lynx, authoritatively; "getting into another man's barrel unbeknownst to him in the night-time, is burglary."

"That," said Fydet, putting out his head like a terrapin, at which the women shrieked and retreated, and Lynx made a demonstration with his club—"that's because you ain't up to first principles—keep your stick out of my ribs—I've a plan, so there won't be no burglary, which is this—no man have no more than he can use, and all other men mind their own business. Then, this 'ere barrel would be mine while I'm in it, and you'd be asleep—that's the idea."

"It's a logo-fogie!" exclaimed Lynx with horror—"right down logo-fogie!"

"Ah!" screamed the servants—"a logo-fogie!—how did it get out?—will it bite?—can't you get a gun?"

"Don't be fools—a logo-fogie is a sort of a man that don't think as I do—wicked critters all such sort of people are," said Lynx. "My lad, I'm pretty clear you're a logo-fogie—you talk as if your respect for me and other venerable institutions was tantamount to very little. You're a leveller I see, and wouldn't mind knocking me down flat as a pancake, if so be you could run away and get out of this scrape—you're a 'grarium, and would cut across the lot like a streak of lightning if you had a chance."

"Mr Lynx," said the lady of the house from the head of the stairs—she had heard from one of the affrighted maids that a "logo-fogie" had been "captivated," and that it could talk "just like a human"—"Mr Lynx, don't have anything to say to him. Take him out, and hand him over to the police. I'll see that you are recompensed for your trouble."

"Come out, then—you're a bad chap—you wouldn't mind voting against our side at the next election."

"We don't want elections, I tell you," said Fydet, coolly, as he walked up-stairs—"I've a plan for doing without elec-

tions, and police-officers, and laws—every man mind his own business, and support me while I oversee him. I can fix it.”

Having now arrived at the street, Mr Lynx held him by the collar, and looked about for a representative of justice to relieve him of his prize.

“Though I feel as if I was your pa, yet you must be tried for snoozling in a barrel. Besides, you’ve no respect for functionaries, and you sort of want to cut a piece out of the common veal by your logo-fogieism in wishing to ’bolish laws, and policers, and watchmen, when my brother’s one, and helps to govern the nation when the President, the Mayor, and the rest of the day-watch has turned in, or are at a tea-party. You’ll get into prison.”

“We don’t want prisons.”

“Yes we do though—what’s to become of functionaries if there ain’t any prisons?”

This was rather a puzzling question. Fyxington paused, and finally said:

“Why, I’ve a plan.”

“What is it, then—is it logo-fogie?”

“Yes, it upsets existing institutions,” roared Fyxington, tripping up Mr Lynx, and making his escape—the only one of his plans that ever answered the purpose.

L.

DOING A SHERIFF.

A GEORGIA SKETCH.

MANY persons in the county of Hall, State of Georgia, recollect a queer old customer who used to visit the county site regularly on “General Muster” days and Court Week. His name was Joseph Johnson, but he was universally known as Uncle Josey. The old man, like many others of that and the present day, loved his dram, and was apt, when he got among “the boys” in town, to take more than he could conveniently carry. His inseparable companion on all such occasions was a black pony, who rejoiced in the name of “General Jackson,” and whose diminutiveness and sagacity were alike remarkable.

One day, while court was in session in the little village of Gainesville, the attention of the Judge and bar was attracted

by a rather unusual noise at the door. Looking towards that aperture, "his honour" discovered the aforesaid pony and rider deliberately entering the Hall of Justice. This, owing to the fact that the floor of the court house was nearly on a level with the ground, was not difficult.

"Mr Sheriff," said the Judge. "Who is creating such a disturbance of this court."

"It's only Uncle Josey and Gin'ral Jackson, Judge," said the intruder, looking up with a drunken air, "Jest me an' the Gin'ral come to see how you an' the boys is gettin' along."

"Well, Mr Sheriff," said the Judge, totally regardless of the interest manifested in his own and the lawyers' behalf by Uncle Josey, "you will please collect a fine of ten dollars from Uncle Josey and the General, for contempt of court."

"Look-a-here, Judge, old feller," continued Uncle Josey, as he stroked the "Gin'ral's" mane, "you don't mean to say it, now do yer? This child hain't had that much money in a coon's age, and as for the Gin'ral here, I know he don't deal in no kind of quine, which he hain't done, 'cept fodder and corn, for these many years."

"Very well, then, Mr Sheriff," continued his honour, "in default of the payment of the fine, you will convey the body of Joseph Johnson to the county jail, there to be detained for the space of twenty-four hours."

"Now, Judge, you ain't in right down good yearnest, is you?—Uncle Josey hain't never been put into that there boardin' house, yet, which he don't want to be, neither," appealed the old man, who was apparently too drunk to know whether it was a joke or not.

"The sheriff will do his duty, immediately, was the Judge's stern reply, who began to tire of the old man's drunken insolence. Accordingly, Uncle Josey and the "Gin'ral" were marched off towards the county prison, which stood in a retired part of the village. Arriving at the door, the prisoner was commanded by the sheriff to "light."

"Look-a-here, Jess, horse-fly, you ain't a gwine to put yer old Uncle Josey in there, is yer?"

"Bliged to do it, Uncle Josey," replied the sheriff, "ef I don't, the old man (the judge) will give me *goss* when I go back. I hate it powerful, but I must do it."

"But, Jess, couldn't you manage to let the old man git away? Thar ain't nobody here to see you. Now do, Jess, you know how I *fit* for you, in that last run you had 'long er Jim Smith, what like to a beat you for sheriff, which he would a done it, if it hadn't been for yer Uncle Josey's influence."

"I know that, Uncle Josey, but thar ain't no chance. My oath is very panted against allowin' anybody to escape. So you must go in, cos thar ain't no other chance."

"I tell you what it is, Jess, I'm afeared to go in thar. Looks too dark and dismal."

"Thar ain't nothing in thar to hurt you, Uncle Josey, which thar hain't been for nigh about six months."

"Yes, thar is, Jess, you can't fool me that a-way. I know thar is somethin' in thar to ketch the old man."

"No thar ain't, I pledge you my honour thar ain't."

"Well, Jess, if thar ain't, you jest go in and see, and show Uncle Josey that you ain't afeared."

"Certainly, I ain't afeared to go in."

Saying which the sheriff opened the door, leaving the key in the lock. "Now, Uncle Josey, what did I tell you? I know'd thar wan't nothin' in thar."

"May be thar ain't where you are standin' but jest let's see you go up into that dark place in the corner."

"Well, Uncle Josey," said the unsuspecting sheriff, "I'll satisfy you thar ain't nothin' thar either," and he walked towards the "dark corner." As he did so, the old man dexterously closed the door and locked it.

"Hello! thar," yelled the frightened officer, "none o' yer tricks, Uncle Josey; this is carryin' the joke a cussed sight too fur."

"Joke! I ain't a jokin', Jess; never was more in yearnest in my life. Thar ain't nothin' in thar to hurt you though, that's one consolation. Jest hold on a little while, and I'll send some of the boys down to let you out."

And before the "sucked in" sheriff had recovered from his astonishment, the pony and his master were out of hearing.

Uncle Josey, who was not as drunk as he appeared, stopped at the grocery, took a drink, again mounted the Gin'ral, and called the keeper of the grocery to him—at the same time drawing the key of the jail from his pocket.

"Here, Jeems, take this here key, and ef the old man or any them boys up thar at the Court-house inquires after Jess Runion, the sheriff, jest you give 'em this key and my compliments, and tell 'em Jess is safe. Ketch 'em takin' in old Uncle Josey, will yer? Git up, Gin'ral, these boys here won't do to trust; so we'll go into the country, whar people's honest if they is poor."

The sheriff, after an hour's imprisonment, was released, and severely reprimanded by the judge, but the sentence of Uncle Josey was never executed, as he never troubled the Court

again, and the judge thought it useless to imprison him with any hope of its effecting the slightest reform.

LI.

THE MUSCADINE STORY.

It was a bland September morning, in a year that need not be specified, that the captain, standing in view of the west door of the Court-house at Dadeville, perceived the sheriff emerging therefrom, a bundle of papers in hand, and looking as if he desired to execute some sort of a *capias*.

The captain instantly bethought him that there was an indictment pending against himself for gaming, and began to collect his energies for an emergency. The sheriff hailed him at the same moment, and requested him to "hold on."

"Stop, Ellis—*right thar* in your tracks, as the bullet said to the buck," Suggs responded; "them dockyments looks *venermous*!"

"No use," said the officer—"sooner or later you must be taken; dog-face Billy Towns is here, and he'll go your security."

"Keep off, I tell you, Ellis; I ain't safe to-day—the old woman's coffee was cold this mornin', and it fretted me. If you've got anything agin me, keep it 'till Court—I'll be thar—'waive all formalities,' you know!"

"I will waive nothing," replied the sheriff, advancing: "I'll put you whar I can find you when wanted."

Suggs drew an old revolving pistol, whereupon the sheriff paused.

"The blood," shouted the captain, "of tne High Sheriff of Tallapcosy County be upon his own head. If he crowds on to me, I give fair warnin' I'll discharge this *revolten*' pistol seven several and distinct times, as nigh into the curl of his forehead, as the natur' of the case will admit."

For a moment the sheriff was intimidated; but recollecting that Captain Suggs had a religious dread of carrying *loaded* fire-arms about his person, although he often sported them uncharged for effect, he briskly resumed his stride, and the captain, hurling the "revolter" at his head, at once fell into a "killing pace" towards the rack where stood his pony, "Button."

The sheriff's horse, by chance, was tied at the same rack, but a wag of a fellow, catching Suggs's idea, unhitched the pony, and threw the bridle over its neck, and held it ready to be mounted; so that the captain was in his saddle, and his nag at half speed, ere the sheriff put his foot in the stirrup.

Here they go! clattering down the street "like an armed troop!" Now the blanket-coat of the invincible captain disappears round Luke Davenport's corner! The sheriff is hard after him! "Go it, Ellis!" "Go it, Suggs!" "Whoop! whoop! hurrah!" Again the skirts of the blanket-coat become visible, on the rise by McCleudon's, whisking about the pony's rump! "Lay whip, sheriff; your bay's lazy!" The old bay gains on Button, however. But now they turn down the long hill towards Johnson's Mill Creek. Right sturdily the pony bears his master on, but the bay is overhauling him fast! They near the creek! He has him! no!—the horse runs against the pony—falls himself—projects his rider into the thicket on the right—and knocks the pony and its rider into the stream.

It happened that by the concussion or some other cause the girth of Captain Suggs's saddle was broken; so that neither himself nor his saddle was precisely on Button's back when they reached the water. It was no time to stop for trifles, however; so leaving the saddle in the creek, the captain bestrode the bare back of his panting animal, and made the best of his way onward. He knew that the sheriff would still follow, and he therefore turned from the road at right angles, skirted the creek swamp for a mile, and then took a direction by which he would reach the road again, four or five miles from the scene of his recent submersion.

The dripping captain and his reeking steed cut a dolorous figure, as they traversed the woods. It was rather late in the season to make the hydropathic treatment they had so lately undergone agreeable; and the departure of the captain from Dadeville had been too unexpected and hurried to allow the slightest opportunity for filling his quart tickler.

"Wonder," said he to himself, "if I won't take a fit afore I git any more—or else have a whole carryvan of blue-nose monkeys and forty-tail snakes after me—and so get a sight of the menagerie 'thout payin' the fust red cent. Git up, you lazy Injun!"

With the last words, Simon vigorously drove his heels against Button's sides, and in a ha'-hour had regained the road.

Scarcely had Captain Suggs trotted a hundred yards, when

the sound of horses' feet behind him caused him to look back. It was the sheriff.

"Hello! Sheriff! stop!" said Suggs.

The sheriff drew up his horse.

"I've got a proposition to make to you; you can go home with me, and *thar* I can give bond."

"Very well," said the sheriff.

"But hands off till we git *thar*, and you ride fifty steps ahead of me, for fear of accidents—that's the proposition."

"Agreed!"

"Not so fast," said Suggs, "*thar's* a condition."

"What's that?"

"Have you got any liquor along?"

The sheriff pulled out a black bottle by way of reply.

"Now," said Captain Suggs, "do you put the bottle on that stump *thar*, and ride out from the road fifty yards, and when I git it, take your position in front."

These manœuvres were performed with much accuracy, and the parties being ready, and the captain one drink ahead:

"For—rard, march!" said Suggs.

In this order the sheriff and captain wended their way, until they arrived at the crossing of Eagle Creek, a stream having a miry swamp on each side. As his pony was drinking, an idea popped into the captain's head which was immediately acted upon. He suddenly turned his pony's head down stream, and in half a minute was out of sight.

"Come, Button," said he, "let's hunt wild-cats a spell!"

The sheriff, almost as soon as he missed our hero, heard him splashing down the creek. He plunged into the swamp, with the intention of heading him, but the mud was so soft that after floundering about a little while, he gave it up, and returned to the road, cursing as much for the loss of his black bottle, as of the captain.

"Hello, Ellis!" shouted Suggs.

"Hello, yourself!"

"Don't you try that swamp no more; it'll mire butterflies, in spots!"

"No danger!" was the response.

"And don't you try to follow me, on that tall horse, down the run of this creek; if you do, you'll have both eyes hangin' on bamboo briars in goin' a hundred yards — besides *moccasin time ain't over yet*, and there's lots of 'em about these old logs!"

"Take care of yourself, you old thief!" said the irritated officer.

"Once again, Ellis, old fellow!" said Suggs, coaxingly.

"What do you want?"

"Nothin', only I'm much obleeged to you for this black bottle—*here's luck!*—you can charge the price in the next bill of costs you git agin me."

The discomfited sheriff could stand this jeering from the captain no longer, so he put spurs to his horse and left.

"Now," murmured Suggs, "let me depart in peace, for thar's no chance to ketch up with me now!—Cuss the hole—and yonder's a horsin' log!"

"Well, the wicked flee when no man pursueth; wonder what they'd do if they had that black rascal, Martin Ellis, after 'em, on that infernal long-legged bay? Durn the luck! thar's that new saddle that I borrowed from the Mississippi feller—which he'll never come back for it—*that's lost* in the mill creek!—jist as good as ten dollars out of my pocket. Well, it's no use 'sputin' with providence—hit *will* purvide!"

"The Grand Jurors of the State of Alabama," he continued, soliloquizing in the verbiage of an indictment; "elected, sworn, and charged—*darned rascals all, with Jim Bulger at the head!*—to inquire for the body of Tallapoosa County—*durn their hearts! it's my body they're after!*—upon their oaths present—*confound them!*—that Simon Suggs—*hem! that's me, but they might've put the 'Captain' to it, though!*—late of said County—*just as if I warn't one of the fust settlers, which I was here, afore they had a sign of a Court-house!*

"Well, it's no use thinkin' about the lyin' thing; I'll have to go Hadenskeldt, at Court, to get me out'n the suck. Now, *he's* a quar one, ain't he? Never got him to do any law job for me yet but what I had to pay him,—drot the feller. Anybody would think 'twas as hard to git money from me as 'tis for a man to draw a headless tenpenny nail out'n an oak post with his teeth—but that little black-headed lawyer makes a *ten*, or a *twenty*, come every pop!"

"Wonder how fur 'tis down to the bend? This creek makes into the river about a mile below it, they say. Never mind, thar's a few drink of the *ipsydinxy* left, and the menajjerie won't opea to-day. I judge if my old woman knowed *whar* I was goin', and *wher* I was goin' to see, she'd make the yeath shake. But she don't know; it's a prinsippel that providence has put into the bosom of a man—leastways all sensible men—to run on and talk a heap afore their wives, to make 'em believe *they're turnin' a rong side out before 'em*, and yet never tell 'em the fust word of truth. It's a wise thing in providence, too. Wonder if I'll ketch that rascal Jim Sparks jewlarkin' round Betsy, down at old Bob's!"

On the morning after the occurrence of the adventure we have related, Captain Suggs sat in a long trim-built Indian canoe, which was moored to the north bank of the Tallapoosa river. Near him was Miss Betsy Cockerell. She sat facing the captain, on a board laid across the gunwales of the boat. Miss Betsy was a bouncing girl, plump, firm, and saucy, with a mischievous rolling eye, and a sharp word for ever at her tongue's end. She seemed to be coquetting with the paddle she held in her hand, and occasionally would strike it on the water, so as to besprinkle Captain Suggs, much to his annoyance.

"Oh, Captin, you do persuade me to promise you so hard. And Jim Sparks says you're married; and if you ain't you mought 'a been, twenty years ago; you're old enough."—(splash!)

"I say, mind how you throw your water! Jim Sparks is a triflin' dog—if I have got a wife, Betsy, she is goin' fast."

"Goin' whar?" asked Betsy, striking the water again.

"Confound your paddle! can't you keep it still? Providence is goin' to take her home, Betsy—she's dwindled away to a shadder, with that cough and one thing and another. She ain't long for this world," he added, mournfully; "and if you, Betsy, will only make up your mind—the devil take that paddle!—you'll turn over the boat, and throw me in the river!—make up your mind to step into her shoes, it looks like it would sort o' reconcile me to lose her"—and here a tear leaked out of each corner of the captain's eyes.

"Oh, Captin," said Betsy, half shutting one eye, and looking quizzical; "thar's so many good-lookin' young fellers about, I hate to give 'em up. I *like* you, Captin, but thar's Bill Edwards, and Jet Wallis, and Jim Sparks, and"—

"'Good lookin'!' and 'Jet Wallis' and 'Jim Sparks!' Why Jet's mouth is no better than a hole made in the fore part of his head with a claw-hammer—and as for Jim Sparks, he's got the face of a terrier dog."

"Do you count *yourself* good-lookin'?" asked Betsy, with great *naïveté*.

"Gal!" replied Suggs, with dignity, "did you ever see me in my uniform? with my silver oppolots on my shoulder? and my red sash round my waist? and the sword that Governor Bagby give me, with the gold scabbard a hangin' by my side?"

Just at this moment a step was heard, and before the captain and Betsy had recovered from the shock of intrusion, Sheriff Ellis stepped into the boat, and asserted that Suggs "was his prisoner!"

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"Treed at last!" said the captain; "but it's no use frettin'; the ways of providence is mysterious. But whar did you cross, Ellis?"

"Oh, I knew you'd be about the old lick log 'a fishin' with Betsy. I'll turn the kunnoo loose, and Bets will take us across. I crossed at Hambrick's ferry, left my horse on t'other side, and come down on you, like a mink on a settin' hen. Come! come! it's time we were off to Dadeville."

"Providence is agin me," sighed the captain; "I'm pulled up with a short jerk, in the middle of my kurreer. Well, but," he continued, musing, "'spose a feller tries on his own hook—no harm in takin' *all* the chances—I ain't in jail *yet*!"

A few yards below the boat landing, there grew out of the bank an immense water-oak, projecting over the river at an angle of about forty-five. A huge muscadine vine enwrapped the oak in every possible branches and tendrils covering it like net-work. The grapes were now ripe, and hung over the river

"In bacchanal profusion,
Purple and gushing."

Betsy allowed the canoe to drop down slowly, just outside of where the tips of the lower branches of the tree dallied with the rippling water. The fruit attracted the sheriff's eye and appetite, and reaching out an arm he laid hold of a branch, and began to "pluck and eat."

"Drot the grapes!" said Suggs, angrily: "let's go on!"

"Keep cool," said the sheriff, "I'll fill my pockets first."

"Be in a hurry, then, and if you *will* gather the sour things, reach up and pull down them big bunches, up thar," pointing to some fine clusters higher than the sheriff could reach, as he stood up in the boat; "pull the vines down to you."

The sheriff tried, but the vines resisted his utmost strength; so crying "steady!" he pulled himself up clear of the boat, and began to try to establish a footing among the foliage.

At this moment Captain Suggs made no remark orally, but his eye said to Betsy, as plainly as eye could talk, "hit her a lick back, my gal!"

Silently the paddle went into the water, Betsy leaning back, with lips compressed, and in a second the canoe shot ten feet out from the tree, and the sheriff was left dangling among the vines!

"Stop your senseless jokes!" roared the officer.

"Keep cool, old Tap-my-shoulder! thar's jist the smallest grain of a joke in this here that ever you seed. It's the coldest sort of airnest."

"What shall I do? How shall I get out of this?" asked Ellis, piteously.

"Let all go and drop in the water, and swim out," was the reply.

"I can't swim a lick—how deep is it?"

Suggs seemed to ruminate, and then replied:

"From—say—fifteen—yes, *at least*, fifteen—to—about twenty-five foot. Ugly place!"

"Gracious goodness!" said poor Ellis, "you certainly won't leave me here to drown—my strength is failing already."

"If I don't," said the captain, most emphatically, "I wish I may be cotched and hanged where you are," and saying a word to Betsy, they shot rapidly across the river.

Kissing his companion as he stepped out of the boat, Suggs sought Button, who was tied to a thicket near by, and mounting, pursued his homeward way.

"*Never despar*," he said to himself, as he jogged along, "never despar! Honesty, a bright watch-out, a hand o' cards in your fingers and one in your lap, with a little grain of help from providence, will always fetch a man through! Never despar! I've been hunted and tracked and dogged like a cussed wolf, but the Lord has purvided, and my wust *inimy* has tuck a tree! Git up, Button, you old flop-eared Injun!"

LII.

POLLY PEABLOSSOM'S WEDDING.

"MY stars! that parson is *powerful* slow a-coming! I reckon he wa'n't so tedious gitting to his own wedding as he is coming here," said one of the bridesmaids of Miss Polly Peablossom, as she bit her lips, and peeped into a small looking-glass for the twentieth time.

"He preaches enough about the shortness of a lifetime," remarked another pouting Miss, "and how we ought to improve our opportunities, not to be creeping along like a snail, when a whole wedding-party is waiting for him, and the wattles are getting cold, and the chickens burning to a crisp."

"Have patience, girls, maybe the man's lost his spurs and can't get along any faster," was the consolatory appeal of an arch-looking damsel, as she finished the last of a bunch of grapes.

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"Or perhaps his old fox-eared horse has jumped out of the pasture, and the old gentleman has to take it a-foot," surmised the fourth bridesmaid.

The bride used industrious efforts to appear patient and rather indifferent amid the general restiveness of her aids, and would occasionally affect extreme merriment; but her shrewd attendants charged her with being fidgety, and rather more uneasy than she wanted folks to believe.

"Hello, Floyd!" shouted old Captain Peablossom out of doors to his copperas-trowsered son, who was entertaining the young beaux of the neighbourhood with feats of agility in jumping with weights—"Floyd, throw down them rocks, and put the bridle on old Snip, and ride down the road and see if you can't see Parson Gypsey, and tell him hurry along, we are all waiting for him. He must think weddings are like his meetings, that can be put off to the 'Sunday after the fourth Saturday in next month,' after the crowd's all gathered and ready to hear the preaching. If you don't meet him, go *clean* to his house. I 'spect he's heard that Bushy Creek Ned's here with his fiddle, and taken a scare."

As the night was wearing on, and no parson had come yet to unite the destinies of George Washington Hodgkins and "the amiable and accomplished" Miss Polly Peablossom, the former individual intimated to his *intended* the propriety of passing off the time by having a dance.

Polly asked her ma, and her ma, after arguing that it was not the fashion in her *time*, in North Car'lina, to dance before the *ceremony*, at last consented.

The artist from Bushy Creek was called in, and after much tuning and adjusting of the screws, he struck up "Money Musk;" and away went the country-dance, Polly Peablossom at the head, with Thomas Jefferson Hodgkins as her partner, and George Washington Hodgkins next, with Polly's sister, Luvisa, for his partner. Polly danced to every gentleman, and Thomas Jefferson danced to every lady; then up and down in the middle and hands all round. Next came George Washington and his partner, who underwent the same process; "and so on through the whole," as Daboll's Arithmetic says.

The yard was lit up by three or four large light-wood fires, which gave a picturesque appearance to the groups outside. On one side of the house was Daniel Newman Peablossom and a bevy of youngsters, who either could not or did not desire to get into the dance—probably the former—and who amused themselves by jumping and wrestling. On the other side a group of matrons sat under the trees, in chairs, and discoursed

of the mysteries of making butter, curing chickens of the pip and children of the croup, besides lamenting the misfortunes of some neighbour, or the indiscretion of some neighbour's daughter, who had run away and married a circus-rider. A few pensive couples, eschewing the "giddy dance," promenaded the yard and admired the moon, or "wondered if all *them* little stars were worlds like this." Perhaps they may have sighed sentimentally at the folly of the mosquitoes and bugs which were attracted round the fires to get their pretty little wings scorched and lose their precious lives; or they may have talked of "true love," and plighted their vows, for aught we know.

Old Captain Peablossom and his pipe, during the while, were the centre of a circle in front of the house who had gathered around the old man's arm-chair to listen to his "twice-told tales" of "hair-breadth 'scapes," of "the battles and sieges he had passed;" for you must know the captain was no "summer soldier and sunshine patriot;" he had burned gunpowder in defence of his beloved country.

At the especial request of Squire Tompkins, the captain narrated the perilous adventures of Newnan's little band among the Seminoles. How "bold Newnan" and his men lived on alligator flesh and parched corn, and marched barefooted through saw-palmetto; how they met Bowlegs and his warriors near Paine's Prairie, and what fighting was there. The amusing incident of Bill Cone and the terrapin shell, raised shouts of laughter among the young brood, who had flocked around to hear of the wars. Bill (the "Camden Bard," peace to his ashes), as the captain familiarly called him, was sitting one day against the logs of the breastwork, drinking soup out of a terrapin shell, when a random shot from the enemy broke the shell and spilt his soup, whereupon he raised his head over the breastwork and sung out, "Oh, you villain! you couldn't do that again if you tried forty times." Then the captain, after repeated importunities, laid down his pipe, cleared his throat, and sung:

"We marched on" to our next station,
The Ingens on before did hide,
They shot and killed Bold Newnan's nigger,
And two *other* white men by his side."

The remainder of the epic we have forgotten.

After calling out for a *chunk* of fire, and relighting his pipe, he dashed at once over into Alabama, in General Floyd's army, and fought the battles of Calebee and Otassee over again in detail. The artillery from Baldwin county blazed away, and made the little boys aforesaid think they could hear thunder

almost, and the rifles from Putnam made their patriotic young spirits long to revenge that gallant corps. And the squire was astonished at the narrow escape his friend had of falling into the hands of Weatherford and his savages, when he was miraculously rescued by Timpoochie Barnard, the Utchee chief.

At this stage of affairs, Floyd (*not the general*, but the ambassador) rode up, with a mysterious look on his countenance. The dancers left off in the middle of a set, and assembled around the messenger, to hear the news of the parson. The old ladies crowded up too, and the captain and the squire were eager to hear. But Floyd felt the importance of his situation, and was in no hurry to divest himself of the momentary dignity.

"Well, as I rode on down to Boggy Gut, I saw—"

"Who cares what the devil you saw?" exclaimed the impatient captain; "tell us if the parson is coming first, and you may take all night to tell the balance, if you like, afterwards."

"I saw—" continued Floyd pertinaciously.

"Well, my dear, what did you see?" asked Mrs Peablossom.

"I saw that some one had *tooken* away some of the rails on the cross way, or they had washed away or somehow—"

"Did anybody ever hear the like?" said the captain.

"And so I got down," continued Floyd, "and hunted some more and fixed over the boggy place."

Here Polly laid her hand on his arm and requested, with a beseeching look, to know if the parson was on the way.

"I'll tell you all about it presently, Polly. And when I got to the run of the creek, then—"

"Oh, the devil!" ejaculated Captain Peablossom, "stalled again!"

"Be still, honey, let the child tell it his own way—he always would have his way, you know, since we had to humour him so when he had the measles," interposed the old lady.

Daniel Newnan Peablossom, at this juncture, facetiously lay down on the ground, with the root of an old oak for his pillow, and called out yawningly to his pa, to "wake him when brother Floyd had crossed over the *run* of the creek and arrived safely at the parson's." This caused loud laughter.

Floyd simply noticed it by observing to his brother, "Yes, you think you're *mighty smart* before all these folks!" and resumed his tedious route to Parson Gympsey's, with as little prospect of reaching the end of his story as ever.

Mrs Peablossom tried to coax him to "*jist*" say if the parson was coming or not. Polly begged him, and all the bridesmaids implored. But Floyd "went on his way rejoicing."

"When I came to the Piney-flat," he continued, "old Snip seed something white over in the bay-gall, and shy'd clean out o' the road, and—" where he would have stopped, would be hard to say, if the impatient captain had not interfered.

That gentleman, with a peculiar glint of the eye, remarked, "Well, there's one way I can bring him to a showing," as he took a large horn from between the logs, and rung a "wood-note wild" that set a pack of hounds to yelping. A few more notes as loud as those that issued from "Roland's horn at Roncesvalles" was sufficient invitation to every hound, foist, and "cur of low degree," that followed the guests to join in the chorus. The captain was a man of good lungs, and "the way he *did* blow was the way," as Squire Tompkins afterwards very happily described it; and as there were in the canine choir some thirty voices of every key, the music may be imagined better than described. Miss Tabitha Tidwell, the first bridesmaid, put her hands to her ears and cried out:

"My stars! we shall all git *blow'd* away!"

The desired effect of abbreviating the messenger's story was produced, as that prolix personage in copperas pants, was seen to take Polly aside, and whisper something in her ear.

"Oh, Floyd, you are joking; you oughtn't to serve me so. An't you joking, *bud*?" asked Polly, with a look that seemed to beg he would say yes.

"It's as true as preaching," he replied, "the cake's all dough!"

Polly whispered something to her mother, who threw up her hands, and exclaimed, "Oh, my!" and then whispered the secret to some other lady, and away it went. Such whispering and throwing up of hands and eyes, is rarely seen at a quaker meeting. Consternation was in every face. Poor Polly was a very personification of "patience on a monument, smiling green and yellow melancholy."

The captain, discovering that something was the matter, drove off the dogs, and inquired what had happened to cause such confusion. "What the devil's the matter now?" he said. "You all look as *down in the mouth* as we did on the *Santaffee* (St Fe), when the quartermaster said the provisions had all give out. What's the matter—won't somebody tell me? Old 'oman, has the dogs got into the kitchen and eat up all the supper, or what else has come to pass? out with it!"

"Ah, old man, bad news!" said the wife with a sigh.

"Well, what is it? you are *all* getting as bad as Floyd, *terrifying* a fellow to death."

"Parson Gympsey was digging a new horse trough and cut his leg to the bone with the foot-adze, and can't come—Oh, dear!"

"I wish he had taken a fancy to 'a done it a week ago, so we *mout* 'a got another parson, or as long as no other time would suit but to-day, I wish he had cut his derved eternal head off!"

"Oh, my! husband," exclaimed Mrs Peablossom. Bushy Creek Ned, standing in the piazza with his fiddle, struck up the old tune of

"We'll dance all night, 'till broad daylight,
And go home with the *gals* in the morning."

Ned's hint caused a movement towards the dancing-room, among the young people, when the captain, as if waking from a reverie, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Oh, the devil! what are we all thinking of? why here's squire Tompkins, *he can perform the ceremony*. If a man can't marry folks, what's the use of being Squire at all?"

Manna did not come in better time to the children of Israel in the wilderness, than did this discovery of the worthy captain to the company assembled. It was as vivifying as a shower of rain on corn that is about to shoot and tassel, especially to G. W. Hodgkins and his lady-love.

Squire Tompkins was a newly elected magistrate, and somewhat diffident of his abilities in this untried department. He expressed a hint of the sort, which the captain only noticed with the exclamation, "hoot toot!"

Mrs Peablossom insinuated to her husband, that in her *day* the "*quality*," or better sort of people in North Ca'lina, had a prejudice *agin* being married by a magistrate; to which the old gentleman replied, "None of your nonsense, old lady, none of your Duplin county aristocracy about here, now. The better sort of people, I think you say! Now, you know North Ca'lina ain't the best State in the Union, nohow, and Duplin's the poorest county in the State. Better sort of people, is it? *Quality*, eh! Who the devil's better than we are? An't we honest? An't we raised our children decent, and learned them how to read, write, and cipher? An't I *fou't* under Newnan and Floyd for the country? Why, darn it! we are the *very best* sort of people. Stuff! nonsense! The wedding shall go on; Polly shall have a husband." Mrs P.'s eyes lit up—her cheek flashed, as she heard "the old North State" spoken of



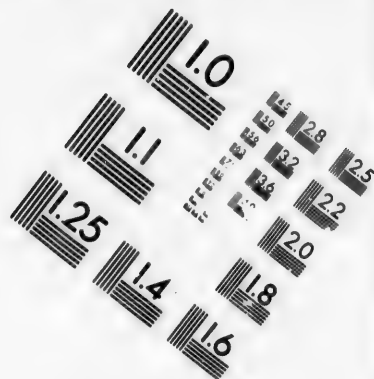
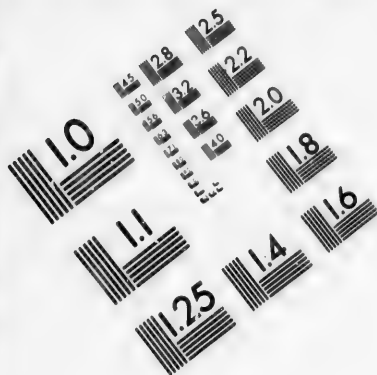
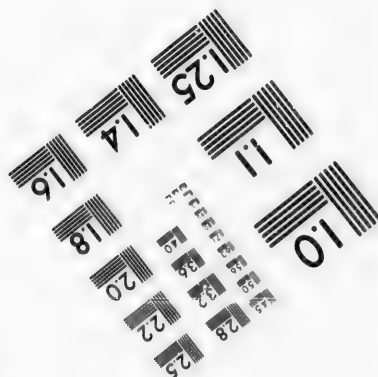
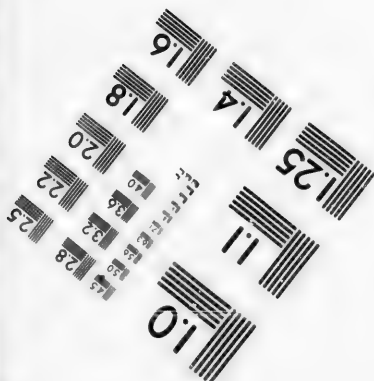
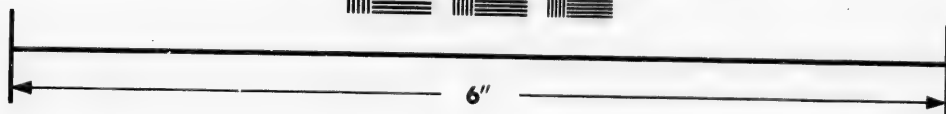
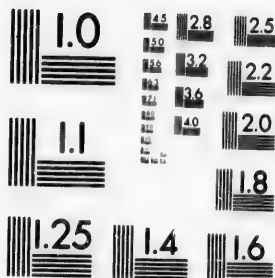


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so disparagingly; but she was a woman of good sense, and reserved the castigation for a future curtain lecture.

Things were soon arranged for the wedding; and as the old wooden clock on the mantel-piece struck one, the bridal party were duly arranged on the floor, and the crowd gathered round, eager to observe every twinkle of the bridegroom's eye, and every blush of the blooming bride.

The bridesmaids and their male attendants were arranged in couples, as in a cotillion, to form a hollow square, in the centre of which were the squire and betrothing parties. Each of the attendants bore a candle; Miss Tabitha held hers in a long brass candlestick, which had belonged to Polly's grandmother, in shape and length somewhat resembling "Cleopatra's needle;" Miss Luvisa bore a flat tin one; the third attendant bore such an article as is usually suspended on a nail against the wall, and the fourth had a curiously devised something cut out of wood with a pocket-knife. For want of a further supply of candlesticks, the male attendants held naked candles in their hands. Polly was dressed in white, and wore a bay flower with its green leaves in her hair, and the whisper went round, "Now *don't* she look pretty?" George Washington Hodgkins rejoiced in a white satin stock, and a vest and pantaloons of orange colour; the vest was straight-collared, like a continental officer's in the revolution, and had eagle buttons on it. They were a fine-looking couple.

When everything was ready, a pause ensued, and all eyes were turned on the Squire, who seemed to be undergoing a mental agony, such as Fourth of July orators feel when they forget their speeches, or a boy at an exhibition, when he has to be prompted from behind the scenes. The truth was, Squire Tompkins was a man of forms, but had always taken them from form-books, and never trusted his memory. On this occasion he had no "Georgia Justice," or any other book from which to read the marriage-ceremony, and was at a loss how to proceed. He thought over everything he had ever learned "by heart," even to

"Thirty days hath the month of September,
The same may be said of June, April, November;"

but all in vain; he could recollect nothing that suited such an occasion. A suppressed titter all over the room admonished him that he must proceed with something, and in the agony of desperation, he began:

"Know all men by these presents, that I—" here he paused and looked up to the ceiling, while an audible voice in a corner of the room was heard to say,

"He's drawing up a *deed* to a tract of land," and they all laughed.

"In the name of God, Amen!"—he began a second time, only to hear another voice in a loud whisper say,

"He's making his *will* now. I thought he couldn't live long, he looks so powerful bad."

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord—"

was the next essay, when some erudite gentleman remarked,

"He is not dead, but sleepeth."

"O yes! O yes!" continued the Squire.

One voice replied, "Oh no! oh no! don't let's." Another whispered, "No ball!" Some person out of doors, sung out, "Come into court!" and the laughter was general.

The bridesmaids spilt the tallow from their candles all over the floor, in the vain attempt to look serious. One of them had a red mark on her lip for a month afterwards, where she had bit it. The bridegroom put his hands in his pockets, and took them out again; the bride looked as if she would faint—and so did the Squire!

But the Squire was an indefatigable man, and kept trying. His next effort was,

"To all and singular, the sher—"

"Let's run! he's going to *level* on us," said two or three at once.

Here a gleam of light flashed across the face of Squire Tompkins. That dignitary looked around all at once, with as much satisfaction as Archimedes could have felt, when he discovered the method of ascertaining the specific gravity of bodies. In a grave and dignified manner, he said,

"Mr Hodgkins, hold up your right hand."

George Washington obeyed, and held up his hand.

"Miss Polly, hold up yours."

Polly, in her confusion, held up the left hand.

"The other hand, Miss Peablossom."

And the Squire proceeded, in a loud and composed manner, to qualify them:

"You and each of you do solemnly swear, before the present company, that you will perform toward each other, all and singular the functions of a husband or wife—as the case may be—to the best of your knowledge and ability, so help you God!"

"Good as wheat!" said Captain Peablossom. "Polly, my gal, come and kiss your old father; I never felt so happy since

the day I was discharged from the army, and set out homewards to see your mother."

LIII.

THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD.

WHENCE comes the gibberish which is almost invariably used by mothers and nurses to infants? Take for example the following, which will answer the twofold purpose of illustrating my idea, and of exhibiting one of the peculiarities of the age.

A few days ago, I called to spend an hour in the afternoon with Mr Slang, whose wife is the mother of a child about eight months old.

While I was there, the child in the nurse's arms, in an adjoining room, began to cry.

"You Rose," said Mrs Slang, addressing a female slave, "quiet that child!"

Rose walked it, and sang to it; but it did not hush.

"You Rose! if you do not quiet that child, I lay I make you."

"I is tried, ma'am," said Rose, "an' he wouldn't get hushed."

(Child cries louder.)

"Fetch him here to me, you good for nothing hussy you. What's the matter with him?" reaching out her arms to receive him.

"I dun know, ma'am."

"Nhei—nhun—nho—nha'am!" *(mocking and grinning at Rose).*

As Rose delivered the child, she gave visible signs of dodging, just as the child left her arms; and, that she might not be disappointed, Mrs Slang gave her a box; in which there seemed to be no anger mixed at all; and which Rose received *as a matter of course*, without even changing countenance under it.

"Da den!" said Mrs Slang, "come along e muddy (mother). Did nassy Yosey (Rose), pague muddy thweetty chilluns? (children)," pressing the child to her bosom, and rocking it backward and forward tenderly. "Muddins will whippy ole

nassy Yosey. Ah! you old uggy Yosey" (*knocking at Rose playfully*). "Da den; mudd'y did whippy bad Yosey."

(*Child continues crying.*)

"Why what upon earth ails the child? Rose, you've hurt this child, somehow or other!"

"No m'm, 'ela' I didn't—I was jist sitt'n down dar in the rock'n chair long side o' Miss Nancy's bureau, an' want doin' nothin' 't all to him, jis playin' wid him, and he jis begin to cry heself, when nobody wa'n't doin' nothin' 't all to him, and nobody wa'nt in dar nuther sept jis me and him, and I was—"

"Nhing—nhing—nhing—and I expect you hit his head against the bureau."

"Let muddy see where ole bad Yosey knocky head 'gin de bureaus. Muddy will see," taking off the child's cap, and finding nothing.

(*Child cries on.*)

"Muddy's baby was hongry. Dat was what ails muddy's darling, th'sweety ones. Was cho hongry, an' nobody would givy litty darling any sings 't all for eaty?" (*loosing her frock bosom*). "No, nobody would gim t'sweety ones any sings fo' eat 't all"—(*offers the breast to the child, who rejects it, rolls over, kicks, and screams worse than ever*).

"Hush, you little brat! I believe it's nothing in the world but crossness. Hush! (*shaking it*), hush, I tell you!"

(*Child cries to the ne plus ultra.*)

"Why surely a pin must stick the child. Yes, was e bad pin did ticky chilluns. Let muddy see where de uggy pin did ticky dear prettous creter" (*examining*). "Why no, it isn't a pin. Why what can be the matter with the child! It must have the cholic surely. Rose, go bring me the paragoric off the mantel-piece. Yes, muddy's baby did hab e tolic. Dat was what did ail muddy's prettous darly baby."

(*Pressing it to her bosom and rocking it. Child cries on.*)

Rose brought the paragoric, handed it, dodged, and got her expectations realized as before.

"Now go bring me the sugar, and some water."

Rose brought them, and delivered both without the customary reward; for at that instant, the child being laid perfectly still on the lap, hushed.

The paragoric was administered, and the child received it with only a whimper now and then. As soon as it received the medicine, the mother raised it up and it began to cry.

"Why Lord help my soul, what's the matter with the child! what have you done to him, you little hussy?"

(*Rising and walking towards Rose.*)

"'Cla', Missis, I eint done nothin' 't all—was jis sittin' down da by Miss Nancy's bu—"

"You lie, you slut!" (*hitting her a passing slap*), "I know you've hurt him, hush, my baby" (*singing the Coquet*), "don't you cry, your sweetheart will come by'm'by; da, de dum dum dum day, da de dum diddle dum dum day."

(*Child cries on.*)

"Lord help my soul and body, what can be the matter with my baby!" (*tears coming into her own eyes*). "Something's the matter with it; I know it is" (*laying the child on her lap, and feeling its arms, to see whether it flinched at the touch of any particular part*). But the child cried less while she was feeling it than before.

"Yes, dat was it; wanted litty arms yubb'd. Mud will yub its sweet little arms."

(*Child begins again.*)

"What upon earth can make my baby cry so!" rising and walking to the window.

(*Stops at the window, and the child hushes.*)

"Yes, dat was it: did want to look out 'e windys. See the pretty chickens. O-o-o-h! Look, at, the beauty rooster! Yonder's old aunt Betty! See old aunt Betty, pickin' up chips. Yes, ole aunt Betty, pickin' up chip fo' bake bicky (biscuit) fo' supper!"

(*Child begins again.*)

good chilluns. Good aunt Betty fo' make bicky fo' sweet baby's

"Hoo-o-o! see de windy!" (*knocking on the window. Child screams*).

"You Rose! what have you done to this child? You little hussy you, if you don't tell me how you hurt him, I'll whip you as long as I can find you!"

"Missis I 'cla' I eint done noth'n' 't all to him. I was jis sett'n' down da by Miss Nancy's bu—"

"If you say '*Miss Nancy's bureau*' to me again, I'll stuff Miss Nancy's bureau down your throat, you little lying slut! I'm just as sure you've hurt him, as if I'd seen you. How did you hurt him?"

Here Rose was reduced to a *non plus*; for, upon the peril of having a bureau stuffed down her throat, she dare not repeat the oft-told tale, and she knew no other. She therefore stood mute.

"Julia," said Mr Slang, "bring the child to me, and let me see if I can discover the cause of his crying."

Mr Slang took the child, and commenced a careful examination of it. He removed its cap, and beginning at the crown

his sittin' down

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Coquet,) "don't
da, de dum dum

the matter with
Something's the
on her lap, and
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of its head, he extended the search slowly and cautiously downward, accompanying the eye with the touch of the finger. He had not proceeded far in this way, before he discovered in the right ear of the child, a small feather, the cause, of course, of all its wailing. The cause removed, the child soon changed its tears to smiles, greatly to the delight of all, and to none more than to Rose.

LIV.

PELEG W. PONDER;

OR, THE POLITICIAN WITHOUT A SIDE.

It is a curious thing—an unpleasant thing—a very embarrassing sort of thing—but the truth must be told—if not at all times, at least sometimes; and truth now compels the declaration, that Peleg W. Ponder, whose character is here portrayed, let him travel in any way, cannot arrive at a conclusion. He never had one of his own. He scarcely knows a conclusion, even if he should chance to see one belonging to other people. And, as for reaching a result, he would never be able to do it, if he could stretch like a giraffe. Results are beyond his compass. And his misfortune is, perhaps, hereditary, his mother's name having been Mrs Perplexity Ponder, whose earthly career came to an end while she was in dubitation as to which of the various physicians of the place should be called in. If there had been only one doctor in the town, Perplexity Ponder might have been saved. But there were many—and what could Perplexity Ponder do in such a case?

Ponder's father was run over by a waggon, as he stood debating with himself, in the middle of the road, whether he should escape forward or retreat backward. There were two methods of extrication, and between them both old Ponder became a victim. How then could their worthy son, Peleg, be expected to arrive at a conclusion? He never does.

Yet, for one's general comfort and particular happiness, there does not appear to be any faculty more desirable than the power of "making up the mind." Right or wrong, it saves a deal of wear and tear; and it prevents an infinite variety of trouble. Commend us to the individual who closes upon propositions like a nutcracker—whose promptness of will has a

sledge-hammer way with it, and hits nails continually on the head. Genius may be brilliant—talent commanding; but what is genius, or what is talent, if it lack that which we may call the clinching faculty—if it hesitates, veers, and flutters—suffers opportunity to pass, and stumbles at occasion? To reason well is much, no doubt; but reason loses the race, if it sits in meditation on the fence when competition rushes by.

Under the best of circumstances, something must be left to hazard. There is a chance in all things. No man can so calculate odds in the affairs of life as to insure a certainty. The screws and linchpins necessary to our purpose have not the inflexibility of a fate; yet they must be trusted at some degree of risk. Our candle may be put out by a puff of wind on the stairs, let it be sheltered ever so carefully. Betsy is a good cook, yet beefsteaks have been productive of strangulation. Does it then follow from this, that we are never to go to bed, except in the dark, and to abstain from breaking our fast until dinner is announced?

One may pause and reflect too much. There must be action, conclusion, result, or we are a failure, to all intents and purposes—a self-confessed failure—defunct from the beginning. And such was the case with Peleg W. Ponder, who never arrived at a conclusion, or contrived to reach a result. Peleg is always “stumped”—he “don’t know what to think”—he “can’t tell what to say”—an unfinished gentleman, with a mind like a dusty garret, full, as it were, of rickety furniture, yet nothing serviceable—broken-backed chairs—three-legged tables—pitchers without a handle—cracked decanters and fractured looking-glasses—that museum of mutilations, in which housewifery rejoices, under the vague, but never-realized hope, that these may eventually “come in play.” Peleg’s opinions lie about the workshop of his brain, in every stage of progress but the last—chips, sticks, and sawdust enough, but no article ready to send home.

Should you meet Peleg in the street, with “Good morning, Peleg—how do you find yourself to-day?”

“Well—I don’t know exactly—I’m pretty—no, not very—pray, how do you do yourself?”

Now, if a man does not know exactly, or nearly, how he is, after being up for several hours, and having had abundant time to investigate the circumstances of his case, it is useless to propound questions of opinion to such an individual. It is useless to attempt it with Peleg. “How do you do,” puzzles him—he is fearful of being too rash, and of making a reply which might not be fully justified by after-reflection. His

head may be about to ache, and he has other suspicious feelings.

"People are always asking me how I do, and more than half the time I can't tell—there's a good many different sorts of ways of feeling betwixt and between 'Very sick, I thank you,' and 'Half dead, I'm obliged to you;' and people won't stop to hear you explain the matter. They want to know right smack, when you don't know right smack yourself. Sometimes you feel things a-coming, and just after, you feel things a-going. And nobody's exactly prime all the while. I ain't, anyhow—I'm kinder so just now, and I'm sorter t'other way just after.—Then some people tell you that you look very well, when you don't feel very well—how then?"

At table Peleg is not exactly sure what he will take; and sits looking slowly up and down the board, deliberating what he would like, until the rest of the company have finished their repast, there being often nothing left which suits Peleg's hesitating appetite.

Peleg has never married—not that he is averse to the conjugal state—on the contrary, he has a large share of the susceptibilities, and is always partially in love. But female beauty is so various. At one time, Peleg is inclined to believe that perfection lies in queenly dignity—the majesty of an empress fills his dreams; and he looks down with disdain upon little people. He calls them "squabs," in derogation. But anon, in a more domestic mood, he thinks of fireside happiness and quiet bliss, declining from the epic poetry of loveliness, to the household wife, who might be disposed to bring him his slippers, and to darn the hole in his elbow. When in the tragic vein, he fancies a brunette; and when the sunshine is on his soul, blue eyes are at a premium. Should woman possess the lightness of a sylph, or should her charms be of the more solid architecture? Ought her countenance to beam in smiles, or will habitual pensiveness be the more interesting? Is sparkling brilliancy to be preferred to gentle sweetness?

"If there wasn't so many of them I shouldn't be so bothered," said Peleg; "or if they all looked alike, a man couldn't help himself. But yesterday I wanted this one—to-day I want that one; and to-morrow I'll want t'other one; and how can I tell, if I should get this, or that, or t'other, that it wouldn't soon be somebody else that I really wanted? That's the difficulty. It always happens so with me. When the lady's most courted, and thinks I ought to speak out, then I begin to be skeered, for fear I've made a mistake, and have been thinking I loved her, when I didn't. May be it's not the

right one—may be she won't suit—may be I might do better—may be I had better not venture at all. I wish there wasn't so many 'may bes' about everything, especially in such affairs. I've got at least a dozen unfinished courtships on hand already."

But all this happened a long time ago; and Peleg has gradually lost sight of his fancy for making an addition to his household. Not that he has concluded, even yet, to remain a bachelor. He would be alarmed at the bare mention of such an idea. He could not consent to be shelved in that decisive manner. But he has subsided from active "looking around" in pursuit of his object, into that calm, irresponsible submissiveness, characteristic of the somewhat elderly bachelor, which waits until she may chance to present herself spontaneously, and "come along" of her own accord. "Some day—some day," says Peleg; "it will happen some day or other. What's the use of being in a hurry?"

Peleg W. Ponder's great object is now ambition. His personal affairs are somewhat embarrassed by his lack of enterprise; and he hankers greatly for an office. But which side to join? Ay, there's the rub! Who will purvey the loaf and fish? For whom shall Peleg shout?

Behold him as he puzzles over the returns of the State elections, labouring in vain to satisfy his mind as to the result in the presidential contest. Stupefied by figures—perplexed by contradictory statements—bothered by the general hurrah; what can Peleg do?

"Who's going to win? That's all I want to know," exclaims the vexed Peleg; "I don't want to waste my time a blowing out for the wrong person, and never get a thank'e. What's the use of that? There's Simpkins—says I, Simpkins, says I, which is the party that can't be beat? And Simpkins turns up his nose and tells me every fool knows that—it's his side—so I hurrah for Simpkin's side as hard as I can. But then comes Timpkins—Timpkins's side is t'other side from Simpkins's side, and Timpkins offers to bet me three levies that his side is the side that can't be beat. Hurrah! says I, for Timpkins's side!—and then I can't tell which side.

"As for the newspapers, that's worse still. They not only crow all round, but they cipher it out so clear, that both sides must win, if there's any truth in the ciphering-book; which there isn't about election times. What's to be done? I've tried going to all the meetings—I've hurraed for everybody—I've been in all the processions, and I sit a little while every evening in all sorts of head-quarters. I've got one kind of documents in one pocket, and t'other kind of documents in

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t'other pocket; and as I go home at night, I sing one sort of song as loud as I can bawl half of the way, and try another sort of song the rest of the way, just to split the difference and show my impartiality. If I only had two votes—a couple of 'em—how nice it would be.

"But the best thing that can be done now, I guess, as my character is established both ways, is to turn in quietly till the row is all over. Nobody will miss me when they are so busy; and afterward, when we know all about it, just look for Peleg W. Ponder as he comes down the street, shaking people by the hand, and saying how we have used them up. I can't say so now, or I would—for I am not perfectly sure yet which is 'we,' or which is 'them.' Time enough when the election is over."

It will thus be seen that Ponder is a remarkable person. Peter Schlemihl lost his shadow, and became memorably unhappy in consequence; but what was his misfortune when compared with that of the man who has no side? What are shadows if weighed against sides? And Peleg is almost afraid that he never will be able to get a side, so unlucky has he been heretofore. He begins to dread that both sides may be defeated; and then, let us ask, what is to become of him? Must he stand aside?

LV.

THE THIMBLE GAME.

Forty years ago, Augusta, Ga., presented a very different appearance from the busy and beautiful city of the present day. Its groceries, stores, and extensive warehouses were few in number, and the large quantities of cotton and other produce, which are still conveyed thither, were transported entirely by waggons. The substantial railroad, which links it with the richest and most beautiful regions of the empire State of the South, was a chimera, not yet conceived in the wild brain of Fancy herself; and many of the improvements, luxuries, and refinements, which now make it the second city in the State, were then "in the shell." Yet, by the honest yeomanry of forty years ago, Augusta was looked upon as Paris and London are now viewed by us. The man who had *never* been there was a cipher in the community—nothing killed an opinion

more surely, nothing stopped the mouth of "argyment" sooner than the sneering taunt,—“Pshaw! you ha'n't been to *Augusty*.”

The atmosphere of this favoured place was supposed to impart knowledge and wisdom to all who breathed it, and the veriest ass was a Solon, and an umpire, if he could discourse fluently of the different localities, and various wonders, of *Augusty*.

The farmers of the surrounding country paid a yearly visit to Augusta, and having sold their “*crap*” of the great Southern staple, and laid in their stock of winter necessities, returned home with something of that holy satisfaction with which the pious Mohammedan turns his face homeward from Mecca. The first step upon arriving in the city was to lay aside their “*copperas-coloured*,” fabrics of the wife's or daughter's loom, and purchase a new suit of “*store-clothes*.”

These were immediately donned, and upon returning home were carefully embalmed, nor again permitted to see the light until the next Sunday at “*meetin*,” when the farmer, with head erect and ample shirt-collar, strutted up the aisle, the lion of the occasion, the “observed of all observers” till the next Sabbath, when his neighbour returning with *his* new suit, plucked off his laurels and twined them green and blooming upon the crown of his own shilling beaver.

These annual trips were *the event and era* of the year, and the farmer returned to his home big with importance and news. The dishonesty and shrewdness of “them Gimblit fellers” (Cotton-Buyers), the extortions of hotel-keepers, the singular failures of warehouse steelyards to make cotton-bales weigh as much in Augusta as at home, the elegant apparel of the city belles and beaux, and the sights and scenes which greeted their astonished gaze, formed the year's staple of conversation and discussion; and it would be difficult to say who experienced the greater delight—the farmer in relating his wondrous adventures, or his wife and daughters in listening to them with open mouths, uplifted hands, and occasional breathless ejaculations of “Good Lord, look down!” “Oh! go away!” or, “Shut up!” “You don't ses so!”

Early in the fall of 18—, Farmer Wilkins announced to his son Peter, that as he, “his daddy,” would be too busy to make the usual trip in *propria persona*, he, Peter, must get ready to go down to Augusty, and sell the “first load.” Now Peter Wilkins, jun., a young man just grown, was one of the celebrities of which his settlement (neighbourhood) boasted. He was supposed to have cut his eye-teeth—to have shaken off

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that verdancy so common to young men; and while he filled up more than half his father's capacious heart, to the discomfiture of Mahaly (his mother), and Suke and Poll (his sisters), he was the pet and darling of the whole neighbourhood. An only son, the old man doted upon him as a chip of the old block, and was confident that Peter, in any emergency of trade, traffic, or otherwise, would display that admirable tact, and that attentive consideration for "No. One," for which Mr P. Wilkins, sen., was noted. A horse-swap with a Yankee, in which Peter, after half an hour's higgling, found himself the undisputed owner of both horses and ten dollars boot, was the corner-stone of his fame. Every trip to Augusta added another block; and by the time Peter arrived at the years of discretion, he stood upon a lofty structure with all the green rubbed off, the pride of his family and the universal favourite of his acquaintances.

The night before his departure the family were all gathered around the roaring fire, Mrs and the Misses Wilkins engaged in ironing and mending our hero's Sunday apparel, the old man smoking his pipe, and occasionally preparing Peter for the ordeal in Augusta, by wholesome advice, or testing his claim to the tremendous confidence about to be reposed in him, by searching questions, as to how he would do in case so-and-so was to turn up. To this counsel, however, our hero paid less attention than to the preparations making around him for his comely appearance in the city. Nor, until he got upon the road, did he revolve in his mind the numerous directions of his father, or resolve to follow to the letter his solemn parting injunction to "beware of them gimblit fellers down to Augusty."

"Durn it," said he to himself, as the thought of being "sold" crossed his mind, "durn it, they'll never make gourds out o' me. I've bin to Augusty *before*, and ef I don't git as much fur that thur cotton as anybody else dose for thurn, then my name ain't Peter Wilkins, and that's what the old 'oman's slam book says it is."

Arrived in the city, he drove around to one of the warehouses, and stood against the brick wall, awaiting a purchaser. Presently a little man with a long gimblet in his hand came out, and bade our hero a polite "Good morning."

"Mornin'," said Peter, with admirable coolness, as he deliberately surveyed the little man from head to foot, and withdrew his eyes as if not pleased with his appearance.

The little man was dressed in the "shabby-genteel" style, a costume much in vogue at that day among men of his cloth, as combining plainness enough for the country-folk, with suffi-

cient gentility to keep them on speaking terms with the more fashionable denizens of the then metropolis. The little man seemed in no way disconcerted by Peter's searching gaze, and a close observer might have perceived a slight smile on his lip, as he read the thoughts of our hero's bosom. His self-confidence, his pride, his affected ease and knowing air, were all comprehended, and ere a word had passed the lion knew well the character of his prey. In the purchase of the cotton, however, the little man sought no advantage, and even offered our hero a better price than any one else in the city would have given him. To our hero's credit, be it said, he was not loth to accept the offer; 15½ cents was above the market by at least a quarter, and the old man had told him to let it slide at fifteen rather than not sell, so the bargain was closed, and our hero and the "Gimblit-man" went out into the yard to settle.

Seating himself on a cotton-bale, the buyer counted out the money, which our hero made safe in his pocket, after seeing that it was "*giniwine*," and tallied with the amount stated in the bill of sale. A few sweet pills of flattery administered to our hero, soon made him and the Gimblit-man sworn friends; and it was in consideration of his high regard, that the Gimblit-man consented to initiate him into the mysteries of a certain game, yclept "Thimble Rig," a game which, our hero was told, would yield him much sport, if successfully played up at home among the boys; and would, when properly managed, be to him a never-failing source of that desirable article, "pocket-change." To this proposition our hero readily assented, delighted with the idea of playing off upon the boys up at home, who hadn't been to Augusty; and already began to revel in the visions of full pockets, when, to his silent horror, the little man took from his pocket a hundred-dollar bill, and very irreverently rolled it into a small round ball.

Three thimbles were next produced, and the game began.

"Now," said the little man, "I am going to hide this little ball under one of these thimbles, all before your eyes, and I want you to guess where it is."

"Well," said Peter, "go it — I'm ready," and the shifting game begun.

To the apparent astonishment of the little man, our hero guessed right every time. No matter how rapid the changes, Peter invariably lifted the thimble from the ball, and had begun to grow disgusted with the game, little dreaming how soon he was to prove its efficacy as a source of revenue, when the little man suddenly checked his hand.

"Wrong," said he, with a friendly smile; "the ball is not under the middle thimble, but under that next you."

"Darned ef it is though!" responded Peter; "I ain't as green as you 'Gusty folks thinks. Blamed ef I don't know whar that ball is jist as well as you does, and dod-dropped ef I don't bet four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents (the price of the cotton) agin the load o' cotton, that it's under the middle thimble."

"No, *Sir*," said the little man, with another smile, "you are wrong, and I'd hate to win your money."

That smile deceived Peter—it manifested a friendly consideration for his welfare, which he felt he did not need, and after bullying the "Gimblit-man" for a few minutes, he succeeded in inveigling him (as he thought) into a bet, which was duly closed and sealed, to the entire satisfaction of his *friend*! Alas for poor Peter! he had awakened the wrong passenger. But the idea of being too smart for an Augusty feller, and he was sure he had cornered one this time, was too great a temptation for him to withstand.

"Drot it," said he to himself, "I seen him put it under that ere middle thimble, I seen it myself, and I know it's thar, and why not win the old man's cotton back when it's jest as easy as nothin'? And ef I do win it, why in course the old man can't claim more'n four hundred and fifty-one dollars no-how." (Peter forgot that the profits to be realized ought of course to belong to the owner of the capital invested.) "The time me and that Yankee swapped critters, warn't I thar? Hain't I cut my gums? Don't the old man, yes, and all the settlement, say I'm smart, and then thar's Kitty Brown, I reckon she ort to know, and don't she say I'm the peertest feller in our parts? *I've bin to Augusty*, and this time, dod-dropped ef I don't leave my mark."

The result we need hardly relate. Peter was tempted—tempted sorely, and he fell. Sick at heart, he ordered Bob, the driver, to turn his mules homeward, and late on Saturday evening he entered the lane which led to his father's house. The blow was now to come; and some time before the waggon got to the house, Peter saw his father, and mother, and sisters coming out to meet him. At last they met.

"Well, son," said the old man, "I s'pose you've been well?"

Here Mrs Wilkins and the gals commenced hugging and kissing Peter, which he took very coldly, and with the air of a man who felt he was getting a favour which he didn't deserve.

"Reasonably well," said Peter, in reply to his father's question; "but I've lost it."

"Lost what?" said his father.

"Lost *it*."

"Lost the dockyments?" said the old man.

"No, here they are," said Peter, handing the papers containing the weights of his cotton, to his father, who began to read, partly aloud, and partly to himself:

"Eight bags of cotton—350—400—348—550—317—15½ cents a pound—sold to Jonathan Barker.' Very good sale," said he; "I knowed you'd fix things rite, Peter."

The waggon by this time had reached the house, and turning to Bob, the old man told him to put the molasses in the cellar, and the sugar and coffee in the house.

"Ain't got no 'lasses, Massa," said Bob, grinning from ear to ear.

"No," said Peter, "we havn't got none; we lost it."

"Lost it! How on airth could you lose a barrel of molasses?"

"We never had it," said Bob.

"Heavens and airth!" said the old man, turning first to Bob, and then to Peter, "what do you mean? What do you mean? *What, what, w-h-a-t* in the d-e-v-i-l do you mean?"

"Gracious, Marster! Mr Wilkins, don't swar so," said his wife, by way of helping Peter out.

"*Swar!*" said the farmer, "do you call *that* swarring? Darned ef I don't say wussin that d'recley, ef they don't tell me what they mean."

"Why, father," said Peter, "I've lost it. I've lost the money."

"Well, and couldn't you find it?"

"I didn't lose it that way," said Peter.

"You ain't been a gamblin' I hopes," said the old man; "you ain't been runnin' agin none of them Pharo banks down to Augusty, is you?"

"Bring me three thimbles," said Peter, "and I'll show you how I lost it."

The thimbles were brought, and Peter sat down to explain. It was a scene for a painter: there sat our hero, fumbling with the thimbles and the ball, but too much frightened to have performed the trick if he had known how; his father sat next him, with his chin upon his hands, looking as if undecided whether to reprimand him at once, or to give him a "fair showin'." Mrs Wilkins stood just behind her husband, winking and smiling, gesturing and hemming, in order to attract

Peter's attention, and indicate to him her willingness to stand between him and his father. The girls, who always sided with their mother, followed her example in this case. But their efforts to attract his attention were useless; they could not even catch his eye, so busy was he in trying to arrange the ball and thimbles; but every time he got them fixed, and told his father to guess, the old man would guess right, which, while it astonished Peter, incensed the old man against him. It looked so easy to him, that he could not help "blaming Pete fur bein' sich a fool."

"Shorely," said the farmer, after Peter had finished his explanation—"shorely it ain't *possible* that you've bin to Augusty so often, and didn't know no better. Didn't I tell you not to have nothin' to do with them *Gimblet Fellers*? Ther ain't one of 'em honest, not one. Like a fool, you've gone and lost jest four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents. It ain't the munny that I keers for, Peter, it's you bein' sich a fool—*four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents*. I'll go rite down to Augusty next Monday, and find this here Barker, and ef he don't give up the munny, I'll have a *say so* (ca. sa.) taken agin him, and march him rite off to gaol—no deaf-allication about that. The theavin' rascal, gwine about cheetin' people's sons outen four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents? How often is you bin to Augusty, Peter?"

"Sixteen times," said Peter.

"Well, I declare," said the old man; "bin to Augusty sixteen times, and didn't know no better than to go thar agin and lose four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents!"

Early on Monday morning the old man started to Augusta with another load of cotton; Bob driving as before, and his master riding his gray mare "Bets." Mr Wilkins had a great many little commissions to execute for his wife and the *gals*. The old lady wanted a pair of spectacles, and the gals a bonnet each—ribbons and flowers, thread, buttons, &c., had to be purchased, and the good farmer was nearly crazed by the loss he had met with, and the multiplicity of things to be attended to. Ever and anon, as he trotted along the road, he would mutter to himself something as follows:

"Leghorn bonnet for Sal—12 skeins of flax thread—2 dozen pearl buttons for pants—one gross horn buttons for shirts—5 grass petticoats—106 pounds coffee—451 dollars no cents—Jonathan Barker—bin to Augusty sixteen times—1 bolt kaliker—Pete's a fool—lost one barrel of molasses and 451 dollars no cents."

With such words as these he would while away the time,

apparently unconscious of the presence of Bob, who was much diverted by his master's soliloquy. As they approached Augusta, his wrath seemed to increase, and he vented his spleen on his old mare and Bob.

"Bob," said he, "you dad-dratted rascal, why don't you drive up? you don't do nothin' but set thar and sleep.

"Take *that*, and *that*, and *that*, he would say to his mare, accompanying each word with a blow; "*git up, Miss, and go long to Augusty.*"

When they had come in sight of Augusta, Bob struck a camp, and his master rode on into town. Having eaten his supper, and put up his horse, he retired for the night, and early in the morning started out to look for Jonathan Barker. He caused not a little laughter as he walked along the streets, relating his troubles, and inquiring of everybody for Jonathan Barker.

"Where's Jonathan Barker," he would cry out, "the Gimblit Feller what cheeted Pete out'n 451 dollars no cents. Jes show me Jonathan Barker."

As a last hope, he went around to the warehouse, where his son had lost the cotton. Walking out into the yard, he bawled out the name of Jonathan Barker. A little man, with a long gimlet in his hand, answered to the name, and our farmer attacked him as follows:

"Look a here, Mr Barker, I wants that money."

"What money?" said Barker, who had no acquaintance whatever with the farmer; "what money is it, Sir?"

"Oh no," said the old man, perfectly furious at such bare-faced assurance. "Oh no! you don't know *nuthin* now. Blame your pichter, you're as innersent as a lam'. Don't know what munny I *meen*? It's that four hundred and fifty-one dollars, and *no cents*, what you cheeted Pete out'n."

"I recollect now," said Barker, "that was fairly done, Sir; if you'll just step this way, I'll show you how I got it, Sir."

A bright idea struck the old man.

"I've seen Pete play it," thought he to himself, "and I guessed *rite every time*.

"Well," said he, "I'll go and see how it was dun, enny-how."

The two walked along to the same bale of cotton which had witnessed the game before, and the gimlet man took the identical thimbles and ball which had served him before, from his pocket, and sat down, requesting the farmer to be seated also.

"Now, Sir," said Barker, "when your son was here, I bought his cotton, and paid him for it: just as he was going

away, I proposed showing him a trick worth seeing. I took this little ball, and put it under this middle thimble.

"'Now,' said I to him, 'you see it, and now you don't see it; and I'll bet you you can't tell where the little joker is.'"

"Well," said the farmer, "all's rite—the ball's now under the middle thimble."

"When I had put it under there," continued Barker, "your son wanted to bet me that it was under the middle thimble."

"So it is," said the old man, interrupting him.

"No," returned Barker, "it's under the one next you."

"I tell you it ain't," said Mr Wilkins, who strongly advocated the doctrine that "seeing is believing."

He was sure he was right, and now a chance presented itself of regaining his former load of cotton.

"I tell you it ain't. I'm harder to head than Pete wus, and blamed ef I don't bet another load o' cotton, that's at the dore by this time."

"You are mistaken," said Barker, smiling; "but if you wish it, I'll bet."

"Let's understand one nuther fust," said the farmer. "You say that ere little ball you had jes now, ain't under the little thimble in the middle—I say it is. Ef it ain't, I'm to give you the load o' cotton—ef it is, you're to give me four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents."

"Exactly so," said Barker.

"Well, I'll bet," said the farmer, "and here's my hand."

The bet was sealed, and with a triumphant air which he but poorly concealed, the farmer snatched up the middle thimble, but no ball was there.

"Well, I'll be dod drapt!" he exclaimed, at the same time drawing a long breath, and dropping the thimble. "Derned ef it's *thar*! Four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents gone *agin*! Heven and airth, what'll Mahaly and the gals say! I'll never heer the eend of it tel I'm in my grave. Then *thar's* Pete! *Gee-mi-my*! *jest* to think o' Pete—fur *him* to know his ole daddy wus made a fool of too! four hundred and fifty-one dollars no cents! but I wouldn't keer *that* for it," snapping his fingers, "ef it wern't fur Pete."

The Gimblit man reminded our friend of the result of his bet, by telling him that the sooner he unloaded the better.

"Now you ain't, shore nuff, in *yearnest*," said the old man.

"Dead earnest," returned Barker.

"Well, stranger," added our friend, "I'se a honest man, and stands squar up to my contracts."

With this he had his cargo discharged into the street, and ordering Bob to drive on, he mounted his mare, and set out for home with a heavier heart than he had ever known before. 'Twere useless to attempt a description of the scene which transpired on the farmer's return home. The first words he uttered were, "Pete, durned ef I hain't lost it too." The misfortunes of his trip were soon all told, after which Peter and his father wisely resolved never to bet on anything again, especially "them blamed Yankee Thimbles."

It is not to be supposed that Mrs Wilkins, Pete, or the gals, could help teasing the old man occasionally on the result of his trip. Whenever he became refractory, his wife would stick her thimble on the end on her finger, and hold it up for him to look at—it acted like a charm. His misadventure, too, raised higher than ever his opinion of the cunning and sagacity of "*them Augusty fellers!*"

A few years succeeding the events which we have attempted to narrate, and Farmer Wilkins was gathered to his fathers; but his trip to Augusta is still preserved as a warning to all honest and simple-hearted people. The last words of the old man to his son were:

"Peter, Peter, my son, always be honest, never forgit your ole daddy, and *allers bewar* of them Gimblit fellers, *down to Augusty.*"

Reader! every tale has its moral, nor is ours without one. Not only did Peter learn from his adventure in Augusta, the evils of betting, but ever since the time to which we have alluded, he always allows his factor to sell his cotton for him. Whatever you may think of it, both Peter and his father came to the conclusion that there was "no use in tryin' to get the upper hand of one o' them *Gimblit fellers down to Augusty.*"

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LVI.

MIKE HOOTER'S BAR STORY.

A YAZOO SKETCH.

SHOWING HOW THE BEAR OUTWITTED IKE HAMBERLIN.

BY A MISSOURIAN.

"It's no use talkin'," said Mike, "'bout your Polar Bar, and your Grisly Bar, and all that sort er varmont what you read about. They ain't no whar, for the big black customer that circumlocutes down in our neck o' woods beats 'em all hollow. I've heard of some monsus explites kicked up by the brown bars, sich as totein off a yoke o' oxen, and eatin' humans raw, and all that kind o' thing; and Capten Parry tells us a yarn 'bout a big white bar, what 'muses hisself climin' up the North Pole and slides down to keep his hide warm; but all that ain't a circumstance to what I've saw.

"You see," continued Mike, "there's no countin' on them varmonts as I's been usened to, for they comes as near bein' human critters as anything I ever see what doesn't talk. Why, if you was to hear anybody else tell 'bout the bar-fights I've had, you wouldn't b'leeve 'em, and if I wasn't a preacher, and could not lie none, I'd keep my fly-trap shot 'till the day of judgment.

"I've heard folks say as how bars cannot think like other human critters, and that they does all the sly tricks what they does, from instink. Golly! what a lie! You tell me one of 'em don't know when you've got a gun, and when you ain't? Just wait a minit, an' my privit 'pinion is, when you've hearn me thro' you'll talk t'other side of your mouth.

"You see, one day, long time ago, 'fore britches come in fashion, I made a 'pointment with Ike Hamberlin the steam doctor, to go out next Sunday to seek whom we couldn't kill, a bar, for you know bacon was skace, and so was money, and them fellers down in Mechanicsburg wouldn't sell on tick, so we had to 'pend on the varmints for a livin'.

"Speakin' of Mechanicsburg, the people down in that ar mud-hole ain't to be beat nowhere this side o' Christmas. I've hearn o' mean folks in my time, an' I've preached 'bout 'em a few; but ever sense that feller, Bonnel, sold me a pint of red eye-

whiskey—'an half ov it backer juice—for a 'coon-skin, an' then guv me a brass picayune fur change, I've stopped talkin'. Why, that chap was closer than the bark on a hickory tree; an' ef I hadn't hearn Parson Dilly say so, I'd ov swore it wasn't er fact, he was cotch one day stealin' acorns from a blind hog. Did you ever hear how that hoss-fly died? Well, never mind. It was too bad to talk 'bout, but heap too good for him.

"But that ain't what I was spoutin' 'bout. As I was sayin' afore, we had to 'pend on the varmints fur a livin'. Well, Ike Hamberlin, you see, was always sorter jubous o' me, kase I kilt more bar nor he did; an', as I was sayin', I made a 'pointment with Ike to go out huntin'. Then, Ike, he thought he'd be kinder smart, and beat 'Old Preach' (as them Cole boys usen to call me), so, as soon as day crack he hollered up his puppies, an' put! I spied what he was 'bout, fur I hearn him laffin' to one o' his niggers 'bout it the nightafore—so I told my gal Sal to fill my private tickler full o' the old 'raw,' and then fixed up an' tramped on arter him, but didn't take none o' my dogs.

"Ike hadn't got fur into the cane 'fore the dogs they 'gan to whine an' turn up the har on their backs; an', bime-by, they all tucked tail, an' sorter sidled back to war he was stan-in'. 'Sick him!' says Ike, but the cussed critters wouldn't hunt a lick. I soon diskivered what was the matter, for I kalkilated them curs o' hisn wasn't worth shucks in a bar fight—so, I know'd thar was bar 'bout, if I didn't see no sine.

"Well, Ike he coaxed the dogs, an' the more he coaxed the more they wouldn't go, an' when he found coaxin' wouldn't do, then he scolded and called 'em some of the hardest names ever you hearn, but the tarnation critters wouldn't budge a peg.

"When he found they wouldn't hunt nohow he could fix it, he begin a cussin'. He didn't know I was thar. If he had er suspicioned it, he'd no more swore than he'd dar'd to kiss my Sal on er washin' day; for you see both on us belonged to the same church, and Ike was class-leader. I thought I should er flummuxed! The dogs they sidled back, an' Ike he cussed; an' I lay down an' rolled an' laughed sorter easy to myself, 'til I was so full I thort I should er bust my biler. I never see ennything so funny in all my life! There was I layin' down behind er log, fit to split, an' there was the dogs with their tails the wrong eend down, and there was Ike a rarin' an' er pitchin'—er rippin' an' er tarrin'—an' er cussin' wus nor a steam-boat cap'n! I tell you it fairly made my har stan' on eend. I never see er customer so riled afore in all my born days. Yes I did too, once—only once. It was that feller Arch

Coony, what used to oversee for old Ben Roach. Didn't you know that ar' hossfly? He's a few! well he is. Jewhilliken, how he could whip er nigger! and swar! whew! Didn't you ever hear him swar? I tell you, all the sailors and French parrots in Orleans ain't a patchin' to him. I hearn him let hisself out one day, and he was a caution to sinners, an' what was wus, it was all 'bout nothin', for he warn't mad a wrinkle. But all that ain't neither here nor thar.

"But, as I was sayin' afore, the dogs they smelt bar sine, an' wouldn't budge a peg, an arter Ike had almost cussed the bark off'n a dog-wood saplin' by, he lent his old flint-lock rifle up agin it, and then he pealed off his old blanket an' laid her down too. I diskivered mischief was er cumin', for I never see a critter show rathy like he did. Torectly I see him walk down to the creek bottom, 'bout fifty yards from where his gun was, and then he 'gin pickin' up rocks an' slingin' um at the dogs like bringer! Cracky! didn't he linkit into um? It minded me of David whalin' Goliah, it did! If you'd er seed him, and hearn them]holler, you'd er thought he'd er knocked the nigh sites off'n every mother's son of 'em!

"But that ain't the fun yet. While Ike was er lammin' the dogs, I hearn the allfiredest crackin' in the cane, an' I looked up, and thar was one of the eternalist whollop'n bars cummin' crack, crack, through the cane an' kerslesh over the creek, and stopped right plumb slap up whar Ike's gun was. Torectly he tuck hold er the ole shooter, an' I thought I see him tinkerin' 'bout the lock, an' kinder whistlin', and blowin' into it. I was 'stonished, I tell you, but I wanted to see Ike outdone so bad that I lay low and kep' dark, an' in about a minit Ike got done lickin' the dogs, an' went to git his gun. Jeemeny, criminy! if you'd only been whar I was! I do think Ike was the maddest man that ever stuk an axe into a tree, for his har stuck rite strait up, and his eyes glared like two dogwood blossoms! But the bar didn't seem to care shucks for him, for he jist sot the old rifle rite back agin the saplin,' and walked off on his hind legs jist like any human. Then, you see, I gin to git sorter jelus, and sez I to myself, 'Mister Bar,' sez I, 'the place whar you's er stanin' ain't prezactly healthy, an' if you don't wabble off from thar purty soon, Mizis Bar will be a widder, by gum!' With that, Ike grabbed up ole Mizis Rifle, and tuk most pertickler aim at him, and by hokey, she snapped! Now, sez I, 'Mister Bar, go it, or he'll make bacon of you!' But the varmint didn't wink, but stood still as a post, with the thumb of his right paw on the eend of his smeller, and wiglin' his t'other finger thus,"

(and Mike went through with the gyration). "All this time Ike he stood thar like a fool, er snappin' and er snappin', an' the bar he lookin' kinder quare like, out er the corner o' his eye, an' sorter laffin' at him. Torectly I see Ike take down the ole shooter, an' kinder kersamine the lock, an' when he done that, he laid her on his shoulder, and shook his fist at the bar, and walked toward home, an' the bar he shuk his fist, an' went into the cane brake, and then I cum off."

Here all the Yazoo boys expressed great anxiety to know the reason why Ike's gun didn't fire.

"Let's licker fust," said Mik, "an' if you don't caterpillar, you can shoot me. Why, you see," concluded he, "the long and short of it is this, that the bar in our neck o' woods has a little human in um, and this feller know'd as much about a gun as I do 'bout preachin'; so when Ike was lickin' the dogs, he jest blowed all the powder outen the pan, an' to make all safe, he tuk the flint out too, and that's the way he warn't skeered when Ike was snappin' at him."

LVII.

COUSIN GUSS.

"WELL, how de dew? I'm right glad to see you, I swow. I rather guess I can say suthin' about the *Revolution* business, purty good varsion, tew, by jingo. My father, old Josh Addams, had his fist in it: any on you know him? Old Josh Addams, as well known as the Schuylkill water-works. He was born in Boston: he didn't die there, 'cause he died in Philadelphia. He used to wear an old genuine '76 coat, little cut down to suit the fashion, made it a razee. One might have known the old man a mile off. If it hadn't been for Cousin Guss, he'd have been livin' to this ere day. You may see Guss in Chestnut Street—any of you know him?—dressed like a peacock, and got whiskers big enough to stuff a sofa bottom. He went down t'other day to see the wild beasts in 5th street; jest as he was comin' away, he met a hull squad of little children a comin' in: when they saw Cousin Guss, if they didn't squeal like ten thousand devils. The old man says, what's the matter, young ones? Oh dear, papa, see, they've let one of the monkeys loose. Cousin Guss didn't show his face in Chestnut Street for a week. Guss telled the old man he must have his coat cut again, and

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altered to the fashion; so he coaxed old Josh to let him take it down to his artist, as he called him, down in 3rd street. Well, the good-natured old critter said he might: when he got it back, sich a lookin' thing as it was, you might have fallen down and worshipped it, without breaking the ten commandments. When we saw it, we all larfed; sister Jedide, she snickered right out. The old man looked at it for about a minute, didn't say a word, by jingo—the tears rolled out of his eyes as big as hail-stones. He jest folded it up, put it under his pillow, laid himself down on the bed, and never got up again: it broke his heart: he died from a curtailed coat.

"The old man used to tell sich stories about the Revolution. I rather guess he could say a leetle more about that affair than most folks. 'Bout six years ago he went to Boston, when La Fayette was there; they gave a great dinner at Faneuil Hall. When the Mayor heard old Josh Addams was in Boston, he sent him a regular built invitation. The old man went, and wore the '76 coat,—that is, before it was cut down, though. By-and-by they called upon the old man for a toast. Up he got, and, says he,

" 'Here's to the Heroes of the Revolution, who fought, bled, and died for their country, of which I was one.'

"When old Josh said that, they all snickered right out.

"There's one story the old man used to tell about Boston, that was a real snorter: he always used to laugh afore he begun.

"He said, down on Long Wharf there was a queer little feller—a cousin of his by the mother's side—called Zedekiah Hales, who wasn't more than four foot high, and had a hump jest between his shoulders. A hullsquad of British officers got round Zedekiah, in State Street, and were laughing and poking all sorts of fun at him: he bore it, cause as how he couldn't help it; one of them, a regular built dandy captain, lifting up his glass, said to him,

" 'You horrid little deformed critter, what's that lump you've got on your shoulder?'

"Zedekiah turned round and looked at him for about a minute, and says he,

" 'It's *Bunker Hill*, you tarnal fool, you.'

LVIII.

THE GANDER-PULLING.

IN the year —, I resided in the city of Augusta, and upon visiting the Market-House one morning in that year, my attention was called to the following notice stuck upon one of the pillars of the building :

“ADVURTISEMENT.

“Thos woo wish To be inform hearof, is hearof notyfyde that edwd. Prator will Giv a Gander pullin’, jis this side of harisburg, on Satterday of thes present munt, to All woo mout ish to partak tharof.

“e. Prator—thos wishin’ to partak will cum yearly, as the pullin’ will begin Soon.—E. P.”

If I am asked why “jis this side of harisburg” was selected for the promised feat, instead of the city of Augusta, I answer from conjecture, but with some confidence, because the ground chosen was near the central point between four rival towns, the citizens of all which “mout wish to partak tharof,” namely, Augusta, Springfield, Harrisburg, and Campbelltown. Not that each was the rival of all the others, but that the first and last were competitors, and each of the others backed the pretensions of its nearest neighbour.

Harrisburg sided with Campbelltown, *not because she had any interest in seeing the business of the two States centre upon the bank of the river, nearly opposite to her*, but because, like the “Union democratic republican party of Georgia,” she thought, after the adoption of the Federal Constitution, that the several towns of the confederacy should no longer be “separated” by the distinction of local party ; that laying down all former prejudices and jealousies as a sacrifice on the altar of their country, they should become united in a single body, for the maintenance of those principles which they deemed essential to the public welfare.

Springfield, on the other hand, espoused the State rights’ creed. She admitted that, under the federal compact, she ought to love the sister States very much ; but that, under the social compact, she ought to love her own State a little more ;

and she thought the two compacts perfectly reconcilable to each other. Instead of the towns of the several States getting into single bodies to preserve the public welfare, her doctrine was that they should be kept in separate bodies to preserve the private welfare. She admitted frankly, that living as she had always lived, right amidst gullies, vapours, fogs, creeks, and lagoons, she was wholly incapable of comprehending that expansive kind of benevolence which taught her to love people whom she knew nothing about, as much as her next-door neighbours and friends. Until, therefore, she could learn it from the practical operation of the federal compact, she would stick to the old-fashioned Scotch love, which she understood perfectly, and "go in" for Augusta, live or die, hit or miss, right or wrong.

As in the days of Mr Jefferson, the Springfield doctrine prevailed, Campbelltown was literally *nullified*: inasmuch, that ten years ago there was not a house left to mark the spot where once flourished this active, busy little village. Those who are curious to know where Springfield stood, at the time of which I am speaking, have only to take their position at the intersection of Broad and Manbury Streets, in the city of Augusta, and they will be in the very heart of old Springfield.

Between Harrisburg and Springfield, and eleven hundred and forty-three yards from the latter, there runs a stream which may be perpetual. At the time just mentioned, it flowed between banks twelve or fourteen feet high, and was then called, as it still is, "Hawk's Gully."

Now Mr Prator, like the most successful politician of the present day, was on all sides in a doubtful contest; and accordingly he laid off his gander-pulling ground on the nearest suitable unappropriated spot to the centre point between Springfield and Harrisburg. This was between Harrisburg and Hawk's Gully, but within one hundred yards of Harrisburg.

When "Satterday of the pressent munth" rolled round, I determined to go to the gander-pulling. When I reached the spot, a considerable number of persons of different ages, sexes, sizes, and complexion had collected from the rival towns, and the country around. But few females were there, however, and those few were from the lowest walks of life.

A circular path, of about forty yards in diameter, had already been laid out; over which, from two posts about ten feet apart, stretched a rope, the middle of which was directly over the path. The rope hung loosely, so as to allow it, with the weight of a gander attached to it, to vibrate in an arc of four

or five feet span, and so as to bring the breast of the gander within barely easy reach of a man of middle stature, upon a horse of common size.

A hat was now handed to such as wished to enter the lists, and they threw into it twenty-five cents each; this sum was the victor's prize.

The devoted gander was now produced; and Mr Prator, having tied his feet together with a strong cord, proceeded to the *neck-greasing*. Abhorrent as it may be to all who respect the tenderer relations of life, Mrs Prator had actually prepared a gourd of *goose-grease* for this very purpose.

For myself, when I saw Ned dip his hands into it, and commence stroking down the feathers, from breast to head, my thoughts took a melancholy turn. They dwelt in sadness upon the many conjugal felicities which had probably been shared between the greasess and the grease. I could see him, as he stood by her side, through many a chilly day, and cheerless night, when she was warming into life the offspring of their mutual loves, and repelled, with chivalrous spirit, every invasion of the consecrated spot which she had selected for her incubation. I could see him moving, with patriarchal dignity, by the side of his loved one, at the head of a smiling, prattling group, the rich reward of their mutual care, to the luxuries of the meadow, or the recreations of the pool. And now, alas! the smoking sacrifice of his bosom friend was desecrated to the unholy purpose of making his neck "a fit object" for Cruelty to reach "her quick, unerring fingers at."

Ye friends of the sacred tie, judge what were my feelings when, in the midst of these reflections, the voice of James Prator thundered on mine ear:

"Durn the old dodger, Brother Ned! Grease his neck, till a fly can't light on it!"

Ned having fulfilled his brother Jim's request as well as he could, attached the victim of his cruelty to the rope, directly over the path. On each side of the gander was stationed a man, whose office it was to lash forward any horse which might linger there for a moment; for by the rules of the ring, all pulling was to be done at a brisk canter.

The word was now given for the competitors to mount and take their places in the ring. Eight appeared: Tall Zubly Zin, mounted upon Sally Spitfire: Arch Odum, on Bull and Ingons (Onions); Nathan Perdew, on Wild Cat; James Dickson, on Nigger; David Williams, on Gridiron; fat John Fulger, on Slouch; Gorham Bostwick, on Gimblet; and Turner Hammond, on Possum.

"Come, gentlemen," said Commandant Prator, "fall in! All of you get behind one another, sort o' in a row."

All came into the track very kindly, but Sally Spitfire and Gridiron. The former, as soon as she saw a general movement of horses, took it for granted there was mischief brewing; and because she could not tell where it lay, she concluded it lay everywhere, and therefore took fright at everything.

Gridiron was a grave horse; but a suspicious eye, which he cast to the right and left wherever he moved, showed that he was "wide awake," and that "nobody had better not go fooling with him," as his owner sometimes used to say. He took a sober, but rather intense view of things; insomuch that, in his contemplations, he passed over his track three times, before he could be prevailed upon to stop upon it. He stopped at last, and when he was made to understand that this was all that was expected of him for the present, he surrendered his suspicions at once, with a countenance which seemed plainly to say,

"Oh, if this is all you want, I've no objection to it."

It was long before Miss Spitfire could be induced to do the like.

"Get another horse, Zube," said one; "Sall will never do for a gander pullin'."

"I won't," said Zube. "If she won't do, I'll make her do. I want a nag that goes off with a spring, so that when I get a hold, she'll cut the neck in two, like a steel trap."

At length Sally was rather flung, than coaxed, into the track, directly a-head of Gridiron.

"Now, gentlemen," said the master of the ceremonies, "no man's to make a grab till all's been round; and when the first man *are* got round, then the whole twist and tacking off you grab away, as you come under (Look here, Jim Fulger, you'd better not stand too close to that gander, I tell you!), one after another. Now blaze away!" (the command for an onset of every kind, with people of this order.)

Off they went, Miss Sally delighted; for now she thought the whole parade would end in nothing more nor less than her favourite amusement, a race. But Gridiron's visage pronounced this the most nonsensical business that ever a horse of sense was engaged in since the world began.

For the first three rounds Zubly was wholly occupied in restraining Sally to her place; but he lost nothing by this, for the gander had escaped unhurt. On completing his third round, Zube stretched forth his long arm, grabbed the gander by the neck, with a firmness which seemed likely to defy *goose-*

grease, and at the same instant, he involuntarily gave Sally a sudden check. She raised her head, which had been kept nearly touching her leader's hocks; and for the first time, saw the gander in the act of descending upon her; at the same moment she received two pealing lashes from the whippers. The way she now broke for Springfield "is nothin' to nobody." As Zube dashed down the road, the whole circus raised a whoop after him. This started about twenty dogs, hounds, curs, and pointers in full chase of him (for no man moved without his dog in those days). The dogs alarmed some belled cattle, which were grazing on Zube's path, just as he reached them; these joined him, with tails up, and a tremendous rattling. Just beyond these went three tobacco-rollers, at a distance of fifty and a hundred yards apart, each of whom gave Zube a terrific whoop, scream, or yell, as he passed.

He went in and out of Hawk's Gully like a trap-ball, and was in Springfield "in less than no time." Here he was encouraged onward by a new recruit of dogs, but they gave up the chase as hopeless before they cleared the village. Just beyond Springfield, what should Sally encounter but a flock of geese, the tribe to which she owed all her misfortunes.

She stopped suddenly, and Zube went over her head with the last-acquired velocity. He was up in a moment, and the activity with which he pursued Sally satisfied every spectator that he was unhurt.

Gridiron, who had witnessed Miss Sally's treatment with astonishment and indignation, resolved not to pass between the posts until the whole matter should be explained to his satisfaction. He therefore stopped short, and by very intelligible looks, demanded of the whippers, whether, if he passed between them, he was to be treated as Miss Spitfire had been. The whippers gave him no satisfaction, and his rider informed him by reiterated thumps of the heel that he should go through, whether he would or not. Of these, however, Gridiron seemed to know nothing. In the midst of the conference, Gridiron's eye lit upon the oscillating gander, and every moment's survey of it begat in him a growing interest, as his slowly rising head, suppressed breath, and projected ears plainly evinced. After a short examination, he heaved a sigh, and looked behind him to see if the way was clear. It was plain that his mind was made up: but to satisfy the world that he would do nothing rashly, he took another view, and then wheeled and went for Harrisburg, as if he had set in for a year's running. Nobody whooped at Gridiron, for all saw that his running was purely the result of philosophic deduction. The reader will not sup-

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pose that this occupied half the time which has been consumed in telling it, though it might have been so, without interrupting the amusement, for Miss Spitfire's flight had completely suspended it for a time.

The remaining competitors now went on with the sport. A few rounds showed plainly that Odum or Bostwick would be the victor, but which no one could tell.

Whenever either of them came round, the gander's neck was sure of a severe wrench. Many a half pint of Jamaica was staked upon them, besides other things. The poor gander withstood many a strong pull before his wailings ceased. At length, however, they were hushed by Odum. Then came Bostwick and broke the neck. The next grasp of Odum, it was thought, would bear away the head, but it did not. Then Bostwick was sure of it, but he missed it. Now Odum must surely have it. All is interest and animation. The horses sweep round with redoubled speed—every eye is upon Odum—his backers smiling—Bostwick's trembling. To the rope he comes—lifts his hand—when lo! Fat John Fulger had borne it away the second before. All were astonished—all disappointed, and some were vexed a little: for it was now clear, that, "if it hadn't o' been for his great fat paw," to use their own language, Odum would have gained the victory. Others inveighed against "that long-legged Zube Zin, who was so high, he did not know when his feet were cold, for bringing such a nag as Sall Spitfire to a gander-pullin'; for if he'd o' been in his place, it would have flung Bostwick right where that *gourd o' hogs' lard* (Fulger) was."

Fulger's conduct was little calculated to reconcile them to their disappointment.

"Come here, Neddy Prater," said he, with a triumphant smile, "let your Uncle Johnny put his *potato-stealer* (hand) into that hat, and tickle the chins of them are shiners a little. Oh you little shining critters, walk into your Mas' Johnny's pocket, and jingle so as Arch Odum and Gory Bostwick may hear you! You hear 'em, Gory? *Boys* don't pull with *men*. I've jist got my hand in; I wish I had a pond full of ganders here now, jist to show you how I could make their heads fly. Bet all I've won, you may hang three upon that rope, and I'll set Slouch at full speed and take off the heads of all three, the first grab, two with my hands and one with my teeth."

Thus he went on, but really there was no boasting in this; it was all fun, for John knew, and all were convinced that he knew, that his success was entirely the result of accident. John was really a "good-natured fellow," and his *cavorting* had an

effect directly opposite to that which the reader would suppose that it had—it reconciled all to their disappointment, save one. I except Billy Mixew of Spirit Creek, who had staked the net proceeds of six quarts of mukle-berries upon Odum, which he had been long keeping for a safe bet. He could not get reconciled, until he fretted himself into a pretty little piney-woods fight, in which he got whipt; and then he went home perfectly satisfied. Fulger spent all his winnings with Prater, in treats to the company—made most of them drunk, and thereby produced four Georgia *rotations*,* after which all parted good friends.

LIX.

HOW MIKE HOOTER CAME VERY NEAR "WALLOPPING" ARCH COONY.

In the Yazoo Hills, near the town of Sartartia, in the good State of Mississippi, there lived at no distant date one Mike Hooter, whose hunting and preaching adventures became famous in all the land. Besides being a great bear-hunter and hard to beat at preaching, Mike professed to be "considerable" of a fighter, and in a regular knock-down and drag-out row was hard to beat.

In order that the world may not remain in darkness as to his doings in this last behalf, and fearing lest there may be no one who entertains for him that particularly warm regard which animates us towards him, we have thought it incumbent on us, in evidence of our attachment for the reverend hero, to jot down an instance that lingers in our memory respecting him, bequeathing it as a rich legacy to remotest time.

Entertaining such partiality, we may be pardoned for following Mike in one of his most stirring adventures, related in his peculiar and expressive vernacular.

"I'm one of the peaceablest fellers," said Mike, "that ever trotted on hind legs, and rather than git into er fuss 'bout nothin', I'd let er chap spit on me, but when it comes to rubbin' it in, I always in gen'rally kinder r'ars up an' won't stan' it.

"But there's some fellers up in Yazoo what would rather

* I borrowed this term from Jim Inman, at the time: "Why, Jim," said I to him, just as he rose from a fight, "what have you been doing?" "Oh," said he, "nothing but taking a little *rotation* with Bob McManus."

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git into er scrimmage than eat; an I've seen er few up thar
what war so hungry for er fight, that they fell away an' got so
poor an' thin that they had to lean up agin er saplin' to cuss!

"That chap Arch Coony was er few in that line. He was
the durndest, rantankerous hossfly that ever clum er tree! I'll
tell you what, ef I hadn't er bin thar I wouldn't er b'leaved it:
I seed him one day in Sartartia git up from er jug of whiskey,
when he hadn't drunk morn'n half of it, and leave t'other half
to spile, and go an' pitch into er privit spoute 'tween two Injuns,
when he didn't care er durn cent which walloped t'other, an'
lamin' both on um out'n ther mockasins!

"Well, you see, Arch was mighty fond o' them kind a tricks,
an' if he seed er fellow he thought he could lamm without no
danger, he wouldn't make no bones, but he'd just go up to the
chap and make faces at him, and harry his feelings er bit; and
ef the feller showed spunky like, he'd let him alone, an' ax him
to take a drink; but if he sorter tried to sidle out of it, Arch
would git as mad as all wrath, an' swar, an' cuss, ar r'ar, an'
charge like er ram at er gate-post; and the fust thing you
knowed, he'd shuck off his coat, an' when the feller warn't spectin'
nuthin', Arch would fetch him er side wipe on the head, and
knock him into the middle of next week.

"You see I didn't like them sort of doings much, me, myself,
I didn't; and I all'ays, ef ever I got er chance at Arch, I'd let
him down a buttonhole or two. He was gittin' too high up in
the pictures, enny how; and sez I one day, in er crowd, sez I,

"Ef that feller Arch Coony don't mind which side of his
bread's buttered, I'll git hold of him one of those days, an' I'll
make him see sights."

"Well, you see there was two or three sheep-stealing chaps
listenin' to what I sed, an' they goes and tells Arch the fust
chance I got I was gwine to larrup him. Well, that riled him
like all fury, and as soon as he hearn it he begins er cussin' like
wrath, and sez he,

"Dod rot that ole Mike Hooter. He pertend to be a
preacher. His preachin' ain't nothin' but loud hollerin' no-
how."

"So you see them same chaps, they comes an' tells me what
Arch had sed; an' I got mad too, an' we had the durndest rumpus
in the neighbourhood you ever hearn.

"I didn't see nothing of Arch from that time till about er
month. Every time I went down to Sartartia to buy ennything
—er barrel of whisky, or backer, or sich like truck, for privit use
—I looked for Arch, an' Arch looked for me, but somehow or
t'other he never crossed my path.

LLOPPING "

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"Why, Jim," said
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"At last one day I sent him word I beleevved he was skerrred of me, and the fast chance I got I would take the starch out'n him as sure as shooting; and he sent word back to me that was a game two could play at, and when I wanted to try it he'd see if he couldn't help me.

"Well, things went on in that way for er long time, an' I didn't see nothing of Arch, so I begin to forgit all 'bout him. At last one day, when me and two or three other chaps was gwine down to Big Black River to go bar-hunting on t'other side of it, I hearn the darndest clatter-whacking, and noise in the road behind us; and when I turned round to see what in the name of thunder it was, thar was Arch and a whole lot of fellers cummin' down the road, er galloping full tilt right up to us, an' er gwine bar-huntin' too.

"When I seed him I was so mad I thought I should er burst myself.

"Now, Mr Arch, I've got you, and if you don't keep your eye skin'd, I'll lick you till your hide won't hold shucks.

"Toreckly, Arch he cum up alongside, and looked me right plum in the face as savage as er meat-axe; and sez he,

"Good mornin', ole Preach, give us your paw."

"I see thar was mischief in him as big as a meetin'-house, and I 'termind to give him as good as he sent, so I looked at him sorter savigerous like, and sez I,

"Look here, hoss, how can you have the face to talk to me, arter saying what you sed?"

"Why," sez he, "Uncle Mike, didn't you begin it?"

"No," sez I; "an' ef you sez I begun it I'll larrup you in er inch of your life."

"Sez he, 'You eternal ole cuss, ef you want to larrup me, just larrup away as soon as you darn please, and we'll see which 'ill get the wust of it.'

"Now," sez I, "I likes you, Arch, 'cause I all'ays thought you was a fust-rate feller; but ain't you been 'busin' me everywhere fur everything you could think of?"

"Yes," sez he, "but didn't you say you'd git hold of me one of these days, and make me see sites?"

"No," sez I, "I didn't: but this here's what I sed, sez I, ef that feller, Arch Cooney, don't mind which side of his bread's buttered, I'll get hold of him one of those days and make him see sites."

"Well," sez he, "Uncle Mike, you knows I'm the most peace'blest feller living, and always mind which side of my bread's buttered, and ef that's all you sed taint nothin'; so let's take er drink."

"Then he tuck out er tickler of whiskey, and arter he'd tuck three or four swallers out'n it, sez he,

"Uncle Mike, obleege me by taking er horn."

"No," sez I, "I won't do no such er dog on thing, for when I likes er chap, I likes him, and when I don't like him, I don't like him: but if you wants to fight, I'm your man."

"You oughter seen Arch then, I think he was the most maddest man that ever wobbled on two 'hind legs.' He rar'd an' pitched, an' cussed an' swore like anything.

"When I see him cuttin' up that way, I commence getting mad too, an' my knees they begin to shake, sorter like I had er chill, an' skeered—no, Sir—an' I s'posed thar was gwine to be thar devil to pay, I give you my word. I ain't been so wrathly before once since, and that was t'other day when that Cain, the blacksmith, drunk up my last bottle of 'bullface;' and when I tacked him 'bout it, sed he thought it was milk.

"But that ein't neither here nor thar. As I was a sayin', Arch he cussed at me, an' I cussed at him, an' the fellers what was along of me sed I beat him all holler. Torectly I begin to get tired of jawin' away so much, and sez I,

"Arch, what's the use of makin' such er all-fired rackit 'bout nothin'. S'pose we make it up?"

"Good as wheat," sez he.

"Well," sez I, "give us your paw," sez I, "but," sez I, "thar's one thing you sed, what sorter sticks in my craw yet, an' if you don't pollogize, I'll wallop you for it right now."

"What does you mean?" sez he.

"Sez I, 'Didn't you sed one day that my preachin' warn't nothin' but loud hollerin'?"

"Yes," sez he, "but didn't you send me word one time that you b'lieved I was skeered of you, an' the fust chance you got you'd take the starch out'n me, as sure as er gun."

"Sez I, 'Yes, but what does that signify?"

"Well," sez he, "ef you'll take back what you sed, I'll take back what I sed."

"Then I begin to get as mad as all wrath, and sez I,

"You eternal sheep-stealin', whiskey-drinkin', nigger-lamin', bow-legged, taller-faced rascal, does you want me to tell er lie, by chawin' up my own words? Ef that's what you're arter, jest come on, and I'll larrup you till your mammy won't know you from a pile of sassage-meat."

"So we kep er ridin' on, and er cussin' one another worse than two Choctaw Injuns, an' torectly we cum to the ferry-boat—whar we had to cross the river. Soon as we got thar,

Arch he hopped down off'n his ole hoss, an' commenced shuck-in' hisself fur er fight, an' I jumped down too. I see the devil was in him as big as er bull, so I begin gritten my teeth, an' lookin' at him as spunky as er Dominecker rooster; and now, sez I,

"'Mr Arch Coony,' I sed, 'I'll make you see sites, an' the fust thing you know I'll show them to you.' Then I pulled off my ole Sunday go-to-meetin'-coat, an' slammed it down on er stump, and sez I, 'Lay thar, ole Methodist, till I learn this 'coon some sense.'

"I soon see thar was gwine to be thar bustinest fight that ever was, so I rolled up my sleeves, an' Arch rolled up hisn, and we was gwine at it reglar.

"'Now,' sez he, 'ole pra'r-meetin', pitch in.'

"Well, I jist begin sidelin' up, an' he begin sidelin' up. As soon as I got close 'nuff to him, so I could hit him a go-darter, sez he,

"'Hole on er minit, this ground's too rooty; wait till I clear the sticks away from here, so as I can have a fair chance to give it to you good.'

"'Don't hollar till you're out'n the woods,' sez I; 'p'raps when I'm done you won't say my preachin' ain't nothin' but hollerin, I spec.'

"When he'd done scrapen' off the ground, it looked jist like two bulls had been pawing up the dirt, I give you my word it did.

"Well, as I sed before, he sidled up, an' I sidled up, and now, sez I,

"'Look out for your bread-basket, ole stud, for ef I happen to give you er jolt thar, p'raps it 'll tarn your stomach.'

"So thar we stood, head an' tail up, jest like two chicken-cocks in layin' time, an' sez I to him,

"'Arch, I'm gwine to maul you till you won't know yourself.'

"Soon as we got close enuff, an' I see he was about to make er lunge at me, sez I,

"'Hole on, dod drot you, wait till I unbutton my gallowses, an' may be so then I'll show you them sites that we was talkin' 'bout.'

"Well, all the fellers was stannin' round ready to take sides in the fight, an' toreckly the chap what kep' the ferry begin to get tired of keepin' thar ferry-boat waitin', an', sez he,

"'Cuss your pictures! I'n not gwine to keep this here ferry-boat waitin' no longer, an' people on t'other side waitin' to

go over, so if you want to fight, come over on this side an' fight there.'

"'Good as ole wheat,' sez I, anything to keep peace away, 'ef you say so, let's get into the boat, and settle it over thar'.

"Well, they all agreed to that without sayin' a word, an' Arch he got into the ferry-boat. I jumped into the eend of it, and was gwine to lead my hoss on too, but the all-fired critter was skeered to jump on to it, and sez I to the man who kept the ferry, sez I,

"'Why don't you wait till I get's this durned four-legged critter into the boat?'

"He didn't say a word, but kept shovin' the boat out, and toreckly my hoss begin pullin' back with the bridle, an' I er holein' on to it, an' the furst thing I knowed, I went kerswash into the drink. So you see, in about er minit, thar was I on to this side, and thar was Arch on t'other, and no chance for me to git at him. I tell you what, I was hot then—and what was worser, Arch he hollered out and sed he b'leved I skeered the hoss and made him pull back, on purpose to get out'n the scrape. When I hearn him say that, I was so mad I fairly biled. However, I soon see 'twarn't no use raisen er racket 'bout what couldn't be helped, so I 'cluded I'd have my satisfaction out'n him any way. An' I begin shakin' my fist at him, an' er cussin' him. Sez I,

"'You eternal yaller-faced, suck-egg son of er —, what is it you ain't mean 'nuff for me to call you? I tell you what! (an' I hope to be forgiven for swearin') I cussed him blue.

"Well, I was so outdone I didn't wait for the boat to come back, for it was gettin' 'most dark and too late for bar-huntin' that day; 'sides, my wife she would be 'spectin' me at the house, and might rais pertickler dust if I didn't get thar in time; so I jumped on my ole hoss, an' put for home. But the way I cussed and 'bused Arch when I got on the hoss, was er sin, an' the further I got away from him the louder I hollered! I p'adge you my word, you might er hearn me er mile.

"To make a long story short, the last word I sed to him, sez I,

"'Arch, you've 'scaped me this time by er axident, but the next time you cross my path, I'll larrup you worse nor the devil beatin' tan-bark! I will, by hokey!'

"Whew!" whistled Mike, drawing a long breath. "I tell you what, I come the nearest wollopin' that feller, not to do it, that ever you saw."

At this moment Mike donned his coon-skin cap, and giving it a terrific *slam*, that brought it over his eyes, vanished.

LX.

AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW.

I HOPE the day is not far distant, when drunkenness will be unknown in our highly-favoured country. The moral world is rising in its strength against the all-destroying vice, and though the monster still struggles, and stings, and poisons, with deadly effect, in many parts of our wide-spread territory, it is perceptibly wounded and weakened; and I flatter myself, if I should live to number ten years more, I shall see it driven entirely from the higher walks of life at least, if not from all grades of society. For the honour of my contemporaries, I would register none of its crimes or its follies; but, in noticing the peculiarities of the age in which I live, candour constrains me to give this vice a passing notice. The interview which I am about to present to my readers, exhibits it in its mildest and most harmless forms.

In the county of —, and about five miles apart, lived old Hardy Slow and old Tobias Swift. They were both industrious, honest, sensible farmers, when sober; but they never visited their county-town without getting drunk; and then they were —precisely what the following narrative makes them.

They both happened at the Court House on the same day, when I last saw them together; the former accompanied by his wife, and the latter by his youngest son, a lad about thirteen. Tobias was just clearly on the wrong side of the line, which divides drunk from sober; but Hardy was "*royally corned*" (but not falling) when they met, about an hour by sun in the afternoon, near the rack at which their horses were hitched.

They stopped about four feet apart, and looked each other full in the face for about half a minute, during all which time, Toby sucked his teeth, winked, and made signs with his shoulders and elbows to the by-standers that he knew Hardy was drunk, and was going to quiz him for their amusement. In the mean time, Hardy looked at Tobias, like a polite man dropping to sleep in spite of himself under a dull long story.

At length Toby broke silence:

"How goes it, Uncle Hardy?" (*winking to the company, and shrugging his shoulders.*)

"Why, Toby!—is that you? Well—upon my—why, Toby! —Lord—help—my—soul and—Why, Toby! what, in, the,

worl', set, you, to, gitt'n, drunk—this, time o' day? Swear, poin' blank, you're drunk! Why—you—must be, an old, fool—to, get, drunk, right, before, all these, gentlemen—a'ready, Toby."

"Well, but, now you see (*winking*), Uncle Hardy, a gill-cup an't a quart-pot, nor a quart-pot an't a two-gallon jug; and therefore (*winking and chuckling*), Uncle Hardy, a thing is a thing, turn it which way you will, it just sticks at what it was before you give it first ex—ex—plotit."

"Well, the, Lord, help, my—Why, Toby! what, is the reas'n, you, never, will, answer, me this, one—circumstance—and, that, is—I, always, find, you, drunk, when, I come, here."

"Well, now, but Uncle Hardy, you always know circumstances alters cases, as the fellow said; and therefore, if one circumstance alters another circumstance—how's your wife and children?"

"I, swear, poin' blank, I shan't tell you—because, you r'ally, is, too drunk, to know, my wife, when, you, meet, her, in the street, all, day, long, and, she'll, tell, you, the, very, same, thing, as, all, these, gentlemen, can—testimony."

"Well, but now you see, Uncle Hardy, thinking's one thing and knowing's another, as the fellow said; and the proof o' the pudding's chawin' the bag, as the fellow said; and you see—toll-doll-diddle-de-doll-doll-day (*singing and capering*), you think I can't dance? Come, Uncle Hardy, let's dance."

"Why, Toby!—you—come—to this? I didn't make, you, drunk, did I? You, an't, took, a drink, with, me, this, live, long, day—is you? I, say, is you, Toby?"

"No, Uncle Har—"

"Well, then, let's go, take a drink."

"Well, but you see, Uncle Hardy, drinkin's drinkin'; but that's neither here nor there, as the fellow said.

"Come (*singing*) all ye young sparkers, come listen to me,
And I'll sing you a ditti, of a pretti ladee."

"Why, Toby! ha—ha—ha—Well, I r'ally, did, think, you, was, drunk, but, now I believe—blast the flies! I b'lieve, they, jest, as li'f, walk, in my, mouth, as, in, my nose. (*Then looking with eyes half closed at Toby for several minutes.*) Why, Toby, you, spit 'bacoo spit, all over, your jacket—and, that's jist, the very, way, you, got, in your—fix."

At this moment, Mrs Slow came up, and immediately after, Swift's son, William.

"Come," said the good old lady, "man, let's go home; it's getting late, and there's a cloud rising; we'll get wet."

"Why, Nancy! what in the worl' has got into you! Is you drunk, too? Well, 'pon, my word, and honor, I, b'lieve, every body, in this town, is, got drunk to-day. Why, Nancy! I never, did, see, you, in, that fix, before, in, all, my, live, long, born, days."

"Well, never mind," said she, "come, let's go home. Don't you see the rain coming up?"

"Well, will, it rain, upon, my, corn-field, or my cotton-patch? Say, Nancy! which one, will it, rain on? But, Lord, help, my, soul, you are, too drunk, to tell me, any, thing, about it. Don't my corn want rain, Nancy? Now, jist, tell me, that?"

"Yes; but let's go home."

"Then, why, upon, the face, of the earth, won't you, let it, rain, then? I, rather, it, should rain, than not."

"Come, old man," said several by-standers, touched with sympathy for the good lady, "come, get on your horse and go home, and we will help you."

"Oh yes, Uncle Hardy," said Tobias, affecting to throw all humour aside, and to become very sober all at once, "go home with the old woman. Come, gentlemen, let's help 'em on their horses—they're groggy—mighty groggy. Come, old man, I'll help you" (*staggering to Hardy*).

"Jist look at daddy now!" said Billy; "he's going to help Mr Swift, and he's drunk as Mr Swift is. Oh, daddy, come, let's go home, or we'll get mazin' wet."

Toby stooped down to help Hardy on his horse—before the horse was taken from the rack—and throwing his arm round Hardy's legs, he fell backwards, and so did Hardy.

"Why—Lord, bless, my, soul," said Hardy, "I b'lieve I'm drunk, too! What, upon the, face, of the earth, has got, into, all, of us, this day!"

"Why, Uncle Hardy," said Toby, "you pull us both down together! The old man's mighty groggy," said Toby to me, in a half whisper, and with an arch wink and smile, as he rose up—I happening to be next to him at the moment—"s'pose we help him up, and get him off? The old woman's in for it, too," continued he, winking, nodding, and shrugging up his shoulders very significantly.

"Oh no," said I, "the old woman is perfectly sober, and I never heard of her tasting a drop in all my life."

"Oh," said Toby, assuming the gravity of a parson, "loves it mightily, mightily! Monstrous woman for drinking!—at least that's my opinion. Monstrous fine woman, though! monstrous fine!"

"Oh, daddy, for the Lord's sake let's go home; only see what a rain is coming?" said Billy.

"Daddy 'll go presently, my son."

"Well, here's your horse, git up and let's go. Mammy 'll be sure to be sendin' for us."

"Don't mind him," said Toby, winking to me; "he's nothing but a boy; I wouldn't take no notice of what he said. He want's me (*winking and smiling*) to go home with him; now you listen."

"Well, come," said I to Uncle Toby, "get on your horse and go home, a very heavy rain is coming up."

"I'll go presently, but you just listen to Bill," said he to me, winking and smiling.

"Oh, daddy, for the Lord's sake let's go home."

Toby smiled archly at me, and winked.

"Daddy, are you going home or not? Jist look at the rain comin'."

Toby smiled and winked.

"Well, I do think a drunken man is the biggest fool in the county," said Bill, "I don't care who he is."

"Bill!" said the old man, very sternly, "'honour thy father and thy mother,' that—that the woman's seed may bruise the serpent's head."

"Well, daddy, tell me if you won't go home! You see it's going to rain powerful. If you won't go, may I go?"

"Bill; 'Leave not thy father who begot thee; for thou art my beloved son Esau, in whom I am well pleased.'"

"Why, daddy, it's dropping rain now."

Here Bill was relieved from his anxiety by the appearance of Aaron, a trusty servant, whom Mrs Siow had despatched for his master, to whose care Bill committed him, and was soon out of sight.

Aaron's custom had long been to pick up his master without ceremony, put him on his horse, and bear him away. So used to this dealing had Toby been, that when he saw Aaron, he surrendered at discretion, and was soon on the road. But as the rain descended in torrents, before even Bill could have proceeded half a mile, the whole of them must have been drenched to the skin.

As to Hardy, whom in the proper order we ought to have disposed of first, he was put on his horse by main force, and was led off by his wife, to whom he was muttering as far as I could hear him:

"Why, Nancy! How, did, you, get, in, such a fix? You'll,

fall, off, your, horse, sure, as you're born, and I'll have to put you up again."

As they were constrained to go in a walk, they too must have got wringing wet, though they had a quarter of an hour the start of Toby.

LXI.

BEN WILSON'S LAST JUG-RACE.

COMING up from Newport, on the pretty little steamer 'Perry,' a few days ago, I fell in with, or chanced to lay across the track of, a Mississippi flat-boatman whom I had not seen for three years, and from having had, once upon a time, a rather personal adventure with him, you may guess that the meeting was one of curious congratulation.

Ben and I had both travelled "some" since we had parted, and he had, as well as myself, many things to tell.

I was sitting on the upper deck, consulting the opinions of one of Job Patterson's A No. 1 Havanas, when a pretty muscular and sun-burnt specimen of humanity hove alongside, and brought a rather big paw down upon my right shoulder with a bim that made me start a *little*.

"How are you, old J comp'ny?" was the first broadside. "I ha'nt set eyes on you sence we had the scrimmidge down to the Washington ball-room, Orleans. Rayther a time that ar?" and he winked his little black eyes until I fancied I heard the lids snap.

"Ben Wilson?" I inquired.

"Zactly; you've hit it on the head this time. How've you ben, and whar?"

"Travelling generally," I responded; "been looking at the Rhode Island Legislature of late. About health I'm as snug as a kitten, and as hearty as you seem to be."

"I? Yes; ef I'd a had them sinners" (showing a lump of bones and muscles *something* larger than mine, I think), "when that ar scrimmidge took place, there'd a been a different report of killed and wounded at the perlice shop. But that ain't no consekense now, tho' thar is a ugly sort of a seam on the larboard side of my phizognomy. What'll you sample?"

Such a polite invitation was not under the circumstances to be refused, and a liquid strengthener was presently applied to

the in'nards of both. A couple more of Job's regalias were lighted, and we walked forward to look at the sights, and enjoy a little quiet conversation.

"You hev'nt got that thar took-pick about you, hev you?" asked Ben, as we got afront of the wheel-house.

"No."

"I'm sorry for that, for I'd a like to had it for a keepsake, *that* knife. You punched it into my jowl rather vigorously that night."

"And this," said I, rolling up my right sleeve, and pointing to a very pretty stiletto scar.

"'Twarn't mine, by all the broad horns that ever run in Mississipp'!" roared Ben. "'Twas the French bar-keeper did that."

"Never mind, Ben," said I, "I thought 'twas you at the time; but anyhow, a man hasn't much time to debate nice questions when that pile of ivory" (pointing to his big fist) "is making love to his windpipe."

"No more he han't, and no more you hadn't," said Ben, "en it's all forgiv'. Less change the topick."

"Been boating since I met you?" I inquired, after a short pause.

"Well, yes, mostly," answered Ben, deliberately. "Druva a pretty fair business last year; only sunk one broad-horn, en that war snagged. Saved part of the load, en lost it agin at a *cre-vasse*. I had a fust-rate openin' this spring, but a awkward accident kicked all the fat into the fire."

"Bad luck, eh? how was it?"

"Did you ever jug for buffalo fish?"

"Never."

"Han't no idee on the *pre-cise* way it is done?"

"Not the least. Yes, I did see something about it in the 'Spirit,' but I've forgotten all about it."

"'Sperit?" Oh, that's the sportin' paper down to York. Nolan, and Hooper, and Steve Tucker writes to it. Some jokes in that ar sheet, onst in a while."

"Occasionally, I calculate; but this jugging for buffaloes."

"Sartin. You see it's as easy as fallin' off a log. Git a dozen jugs en two canoes; hitch your lines to the handles of the jugs, put on your bait, and then toss them overboard. When you sees a jug begin to bob, there's a buffalo thar: en when it begins to dive and run, you may calk'late there's one varmint hooked. Strike out like a pointer, pull up the line, and the fish is *thar*; but you've got to keep your weather eye open, or you lose him."

"I understand; but the awkward accident you spoke of?"

"Yes, of course; that'll come in good time. D'you recollect that feller with the one eye that stuck by me in that scrimmidge at Orleans?"

"Perfectly; I *felt* him audibly that night."

"Joe Stilwell. Wal, Joe and I run together, en we run sens, tel we fell out on one of these jug affairs; en then he sot up for hisself—oppersition. 'Bout the last of *A-prile* we hap'nd to come together to Saint Lewis, en started down the river the same day. Joe had the start five hours, an' I were glad of it; for he hadn't no good feelin' towards me, en' I hadn't none for him, I swar. It war two days 'fore I see anythink of him, but a man who got on at Milses wood-yard said Joe wanted to tackle me; en sez he, 'Z'likes not he'll stop to Ransom's for freight, for he han't got more'n two-thirds his complement.' Sez I, 'Ef Joe runs across my bows, he knows what'll be the konseken's; an' we didn't say no more about the matter.

"It was midnight when we got to Ransom's, an' I was debatin' whether it warn't better to shove along then to stop, when I heres Joe's voice a usin' of my name. That was all war wanted to settle the matter. I tied up, and asked all hands to lick. Joe he was the fust one to come up, sez he,

"Ben, we've had some rily feelins, en let's settle them rash'nally."

"How?" sez I, not 'zactly understandin' him.

"Rash'nally," sez he. "I'll drink with you, and you drink with me, en then we'll call it squar."

"Greed!" sez I, en we lickered round twiste, en Joe and I shook hands, en squar'd off all old 'counts *pertensively*.

"Thar was suthin' in his looks I didn't like when we shuck hands; but sez I to myself, 'this coon sleeps in the day-time, maybe, but he's wide awake on this yer night.' Ransom, he seemed glad we'd made up again 'fer all time,' es he said, and we lickered 'long a him.

"While we was drinkin' 'long a Ransom, one of my hands come in en whispered softly in my ear, all unbeknown to the rest, that somebody hed ben tryin' to cut my starn-cable, and then he sneaked back to watch for the marorder.

"I got off pretty soon after, en went aboard a *leeble* riled. But I didn't tell the boys who I thought was the rascal, thoar I told 'em to keep a sharp watch, en fire to kill, when they did shoot. But tha' warn't nobody come, Joe knew better than to play with the old fox in his den—Joe did.

"Nex' mornin' we were just castin' off, when Joe come down to the wharf-boat, en sez he,

"'You ain't goin' off mad, ar you?'"

"'No,' sez I.

"'Wal,' sez he, 'less take a partin' smile.'

"'I didn't like the idea, but Ransom he said,

"'Come in, Ben!' en in I went and drinkt.

"'What d'you say to a buffalo-juggin?'" said Joe, arter we'd lickered.

"'It's too airy in the season,' sez I; 'b'sides I'm off for Orleans.'

"'So'm I,' said Joe, 'at eleven; en we'll go company.'"

"'What's the blaze?'" said Ransom.

"'Two canoes, and one jug,' said Joe.

"'I knowed what he was after then, for it showed clean out'n his eyes. Joe war the best swimmer, en he thort ef we cum together an' upset the canoes, he'd have the advantage. He knowed he'd git catawompously chored up ashore, en *he wanted to drown me.*"

"'What a devil incarnate!'" I exclaimed.

"'That's just him 'zactly. I thort a minit, and then sez I,

"'I'm your man.'

"'Wal, a skiff tuck out the only jug, en Joe en I paddled from shore leisurely.

"'A bob!' yelled out Ransom, en we started.

"'We was about ten rods apart, en neck-en-neck. On we swept like greased lightnin', Joe leadin' by 'bout *two inches*, I should guess. I had not look't at Joe sens we left shore, but as we draw'd nigh the jug I seed he had his coat and jacket off. We was within ten foot of the jug, en both dropped paddles, en I shed my coat en jacket a *leetle* quicker'n common. Tha' warn't no misunderstandin' between us then; en as the canoes come together, both grappled and went overboard, and underneath the water."

Ben here paused, took out his bandanna, and wiped the big drops off his forehead, as coolly as if he was recounting the events of a dinner-party.

"'Well,'" I urged impatiently, "you both went under the water?"

"'Yes, that was the *accident* happened!'"

"'Accident? explain."

"'Why, I've no more to say'n this. I riz, en got aboard my broad-horn, en come away."

"'But Joe—what became of him?"

"'Joe? *he was a missin' 'long with my bowie-knife!*"

I parted with Ben, when the 'Perry' touched the wharf at

Providence, not caring, *under the circumstances*, to inquire which way he was travelling.

LXII.

MIKE FINK IN A TIGHT PLACE.

MIKE FINK, a notorious Buckeye-hunter, was contemporary with the celebrated Davy Crockett, and his equal in all things relating to human prowess. It was even said that the animals knew the crack of his rifle, and would take to their secret hiding-places, on the first intimation that Mike was about. Yet strange, though true, he was but little known beyond his immediate "settlement."

When *we* knew him he was an old man—the blasts of seventy winters had silvered o'er his head, and taken the elasticity from his limbs; yet in the whole of his life was Mike never worsted, except upon one occasion. To use his own language, he never "gin in," used up, to anything that travelled on two legs or four, but once.

"That *once* we want," said Bill Slasher, as some dozen of us sat in the bar-room of the only tavern in the "settlement."

"Gin it to us now, Mike; you've promised long enough, and you're old now, and needn't care," continued Bill.

"Right, right, Bill," said Mike; "but we'll open with a *licker* all round fust, it'll kind o' save my feelin's I reckon."

"Thar, that's good. Better than t'other barrel, if anything."

"Well, boys," commenced Mike, "you may talk o' your scrimmages, tight places, and sich like, and substract 'em altogether in one all-mighty big 'un, and they hain't no more to be compared to the one I war in, than a dead kitten to an old she-bar. I've fout all kinds of varmints, from a Ingun down to a rattlesnake, and never was willin' to quit fust, but this once, and 'twas with a bull!

"You see, boys, it was an awful hot day in August, and I war near runnin' off into pure *ile*, when I war thinkin' that a *dip* in the creek mout save me. Well, thar was a mighty nice place in old Deacon Smith's medder for that partic'lar bizziness. So I went down among the bushes to unharness. I jest hauled the old red shirt over my head, and war thinkin' how scrump-tious a feller of my size would feel a wallerin' round in that ar

water, and was jest 'bout goin' in, when I seed the old Deacon's bull a makin a b-line to whar I stood.

"I know'd the old cuss, for he'd skar'd more people than all the parsons in the 'settlement,' and cum mighty near killin' a few. Thinks I, Mike, you're in rather a tight place. Get your fixin's on, for he'll be drivin' them big horns o' his in yer bowels afore that time. Well, you'll hev to try the old varmint naked, I reck'n.

"The bull war on one side o' the creek, and I on t'other, and the way he made the 'sile' fly for a while, as if he war diggin' my grave, war distressin'!

"'Come on, ye bellerin' old heathen,' said I, 'and don't be a standin' there; for, as the old Deacon says o' the devil, yer not comely to look on.'

"This kind o' reached his understandin', and made him more wishious; for he hoofed a little like, and made a drive. And as I don't like to stand in anybody's way, I gin him plenty sea-room. So he kind o' passed by me, and cum out on t'other side; and as the captain o' the mud-swamp rangers would say: 'bout face for another charger.'

"Though I war ready for him this time, he come mighty nigh runnin' foul o' me. So I made up my minde the next time he went out he wouldn't be alone. So when he passed, I grappled his tail, and he pulled me out on the 'sile,' and as soon as we were both a'top o' the bank, old Brindle stopped, and was about comin' round agin, when I begin pull'n t'other way.

"Well, I reckon this kind o' *riled* him, for he fust stood stock still, and look'd at me for a spell, and then commenced pawin' and bellerin', and the way he made his hind gearing play in the air, war beautiful!

"But it warn't no use, he couldn't *tech* me, so he kind o' stopped to get wind for suthin' devilish, as I *judged* by the way he stared. By this time I had made up my mind to stick to his tail as long as it stuck to his back-bone! I didn't like to holler fur help, nuther, kase it war agin my principles; and then the Deacon had preached at his house, and it warn't far off nuther.

"I know'd if he *hern* the noise, the hull congregation would come down; and as I warn't a married man, and had a kind o' hankerin' arter a gal that war thar, I didn't feel as if I would like to be seed in that ar predicament.

"'So,' ses I, 'you old sarpent, do yer cussedst!'

"And so he did; for he drug me over every briar and stump in the field, until I was sweatin' and bleedin' like a fat

bar with a pack o' hounds at his heels. And my name ain't Mike Fink, if the old critter's tail and I didn't blow out sometimes at a dead level with the varmint's back!

"So you may kalkilate we made good time. Bimeby he slackened a little, and then I had him for a spell, for I jêst dropped behind a stump, and that snubbed the critter.

"'Now,' ses I, 'you'll pull up this 'ere white oak, break you're tail, or jist hold on a bit till I blow.'

"Well, while I war settin' thar, an idea struck me that I had better be a gettin' out o' this in some way. But *how*, *adarny*, was the *pint*! If I let go and run, he'd be a foul o' me sure.

"So lookin' at the matter in all its bearins, I cum to the conclusion that I'd better let somebody *know* whar I was. So I gin a *yell* louder than a locomotive whistle, and it warn't long before I seed the Deacon's two dogs a comin' down like as if they war seein' which could get thar fust.

"I know'd who they war arter—they'd jine the bull agin me, I war sartin, for they war awful wenimous, and had a spite agin me.

"'So,' ses I, 'old Brindle, as ridin' is as cheap as walkin' on this rout, if you've no objections, I'll jêst take a deck passage on that ar back o' your'n.'

"So I wasn't long gettin' astride of him, and then if you'd been thar, you'd 'ave sworn thar warn't nothin' human in that ar *mix*; the sile flew so orrifully as the critter and I rolled round the field—one dog on one side and one on t'other, tryin' to clinch my feet!

"I pray'd and cuss'd, and cuss'd and pray'd, until I couldn't tell which I did last—and neither warn't of any use, they war so orrifully mix'd up.

"Well, I reckon I rid about an hour this way, when old Brindle thought it war time to stop and take in a supply of wind and cool off a little! So when we got round to a tree that stood thar, he nat'rally halted!

"'Now,' sez I, 'old boy, you'll lose *one* passenger sartin!'

"So I just clum upon a branch, kalkelating to roost thar till I starved, afore I'd be rid round that ar way any more.

"I war makin' tracks for the top of the tree, when I heard suthin' a makin' an orful buzzin' over head, I kinder looked up, and if thar warn't—well thar's no use swearin' now, but it war the biggest *hornet's nest* ever built!

"You'll gin in now, I reckon, Mike, case thar's no help for you! But an idea struck me, then, that I'd stand a heap better chance a ridin' the old bull than where I war. Ses I, 'Old feller,

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if you'll hold on, I'll ride to the next *station* anyhow, let that be whar it will!

"So I jest drapped aboard him agin, and looked aloft to see what I'd gained in changing quarters; and, gentlemen, I'm a liar if thar warn't nigh half a bushel of the stingen' varmints ready to pitch into me when the word 'go' was gin!

"Well, I reckon they got it, for 'all hands' started for our *company*! Some on 'em hit the dogs—about a *quart* struck me, and the rest charged old Brindle.

"This time, the dogs led off fust, 'dead' beat, for the old Deacon's, and as soon as old Brindle and I could get under way, we *followed*. And as I war only a deck passenger, and had nothin' to do with stearin' the craft, I swore if I had we shouldn't have run that channel, anyhow!

"But, as I said before, the dogs took the lead—Brindle and I next, and the hornets dre'kly arter. The dogs yellin', Brindle bellerin', and the hornets buzzin' and sting'n'! I didn't say nothin', for it warn't no use.

"Well, we'd got 'bout two hundred yards from the house, and the Deacon hearn us and cum out. I seed him hold up his hands and turn *white*! I reckon he were prayin' then, for he didn't expect to be called for so soon, and it warn't long, neither, afore the hull congregation, men, women, and children, cum out, and then all hands went to yellin'!

"None of 'em had the fust notion that Brindle and I belonged to this world. I jest turned my head, and passed the *hull* congregation! I seed the run would be up soon, for Brindle couldn't turn an inch from a fence that stood dead ahead.

"Well, we reached that fence, and I went *ashore*, over the old critter's head, landin' on t'other side, and lay thar stunned. It warn't long afore some of 'em as war not so scared, come round to see what I war, for all hands kalkelated that the bull and I belonged *together*! But when Brindle walked off by himself, they seed how it war, and one of 'em said:

"Mike Fink has got the *worst of the scrimmage once in his life*!"

"Gentlemen, from that day I drapped the *courtin'* bizziness, and never spoke to a gal since! And when my hunt is up on this yearth, thar won't be any more F I N K S, and it's all owin' to Deacon Smith's Brindle Bull."

LXIII.

OUR SINGING-SCHOOL.

A CHAPTER FROM THE HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF PIGWACKET.

MY second cousin by the mother's side, Benjamin Blackletter, A.M., who was born and lived all his lifetime in the ancient town of Pigwacket, has compiled, with scrupulous accuracy, the annals of that venerable town in three volumes folio, which he proposes to publish as soon as he can find a Boston bookseller who will undertake the job. I hope this will be accomplished before long, for Pigwacket is a very interesting spot, though not very widely known. It is astonishing what important events are going on every day, in odd corners of this country, which the world knows nothing about. When I read over these trusty folios, which bear the title, "*THE GENERAL HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF PIGWACKET, from its first settlement until the present day, comprising an authentic relation of all its civil, military, ecclesiastical, financial, and statistical concerns, compiled from original records, &c.*," and see the great deeds that have been done in that respectable town, and the great men that have figured therein, and reflect that the fame thereof, so far from extending to the four corners of the earth, has hardly penetrated as far as Boston, I heave a sigh for mortal glory.

Knowing that my readers must be impatient for the appearance of the three folios of the History of Pigwacket, and as they cannot be put to press for some months, I avail myself of this chance to feed their curiosity by an extract, as the cook at Camancho's wedding gave Sancho a couple of pullets to stay his stomach till dinner-time. Take then the portion contained in Chapter CLXXXVIII., which begins as follows:—

It becomes my lot at this period of the narrative to chronicle an event that formed quite an epoch in the history of the town, or rather of that part which constituted our parish. This occurrence may not be deemed by the world quite so momentous as the Declaration of Independence, or the French Revolution, but the reader may believe me, it was a great affair in our community. This was no less than a mighty feud in church matters about psalm-singing. The whole parish went by the ears about it, and the affair gave the community such a

rouse, that many people feared we should never fairly recover the shock. The particulars were these :

From time immemorial we had continued to sing psalms at meeting, as became good Christians and lovers of harmony. But my readers, accustomed to the improvements of modern days, have need to be informed that up to this period, our congregation had practised this accomplishment according to that old method of psalmody, known by the designation of "read-a-line-and-sing-a-line." This primitive practice, which had first come into use when hymn-books were scarce, was still persisted in, though the necessity for its continuance no longer existed. Our church music, therefore, exhibited the quaint and patriarchal alternation of recitation and melody, if melody it might be called, while some towns in the neighbourhood had adopted the new fashion, and surprised us by the superiority of their performances over the rude and homely chants of old.

But it was not long ere the wish to improve our style of singing began to show itself among us. At the first announcement of such a design, the piety of many of the old members took the alarm, and the new method was denounced as heathenish and profane.

The chief personage who figured in the troubles which arose upon this matter was Deacon Dogskin, a man of scrupulous orthodoxy, highly dogmatical on theological points, and a leader of powerful influence in the church. This dignitary, whose office it had been to give out the several lines of the psalm as they were sung, was one of the sturdiest opponents of the new-fangled psalmody, and set his face against the innovation with all the zeal and devotion of a primitive Christian. Unfortunately for him, Deacon Grizzle, his colleague, took the opposite side of the question, exemplifying the vulgar saying, "Two of a trade can never agree."

The discordancy, to tell the whole truth, between these two worthies lay in more interests than one, and it is to be doubted whether they would have come to a rupture in church affairs, had not their mutual animosities been quickened by certain temporal janglings ; for so it happened that the two deacons kept each a grocery store, and neither of them ever let a chance slip of getting away the other's custom. Sorry I am to record the frailties of two such reputable personages, who looked upon themselves as burning and shining lights in our community ; but I am afraid that the fact cannot be concealed, that the petty bickerings which arose between them on these little matters of filthy lucre were suffered to intrude within the walls of the sanctuary, and stir up the flame of discord in the great

psalm-singing feud; whereby, as our neighbour Hopper Paul sagely remarked, the world may learn wisdom, and lay it down as a maxim, that church affairs can never thrive when the deacons are grocers.

Deacon Grizzle, therefore, partly from conscience and partly from spite, placed himself at the head of the innovators, and took every occasion to annoy his associate with all sorts of ingenious reasons why the singing should be performed without any intermixture of recitation. The younger part of the congregation were chiefly ranged under his banner, but the older people mustered strong on the opposite side. To hear the disputes that were carried on upon this point, and the pertinacity with which each one maintained his opinion, an uninformed spectator would have imagined the interests of the whole Christian world were at stake. In truth, a great many of the good old souls really looked upon the act of altering the mode of singing as a departure from the faith given unto the saints. It was a very nice and difficult thing to come to a conclusion where all parties were so hotly interested, but an incident which fell out not long afterward, contributed to hasten the revolution.

Deacon Dogskin, as I have already remarked, was the individual on whom devolved, by prescriptive right, the duty of giving out the psalm. The Deacon was in all things a stickler for ancient usages; not only was he against giving up a hair's breadth of the old custom, but his attachment to the antique forms went so far as to embrace all the circumstances of immaterial moment connected with them. His predilection for the old tone of voice was not to be overcome by any entreaty, and we continued to hear the same nasal, snuffling drawl, which, nobody knows how, he had contracted in the early part of his deaconship, although on common occasions he could speak well enough. But the tone was a part of his vocation; long use had consecrated it, and the Deacon would have his way. His psalm-book, too, by constant use had become to such a degree thumbed and blurred and torn and worn, that it was a puzzle how, with his old eyes, he could make anything of one half the pages. However, a new psalm-book was a thing he would never hear spoken of, for, although the thing could not be styled an innovation, inasmuch as it contained precisely the same collocation of words and syllables, yet it was the removal of an old familiar object from his sight, and his faith seemed to be bound up in the greasy covers and dingy leaves of the volume. So the Deacon stuck to his old psalm-book, and, by the help of his memory where the letter-press failed him, he made a shift to keep up with the singers, who, to tell the truth, were not re-

markable for the briskness of their notes, and dealt more in semibreves than in demi-semi-quavers.

But, on a certain day, it happened that the Deacon, in the performance of his office, stumbled on a line which happened to be more than usually thumbled, and defied all his attempts to puzzle it out. In vain he wiped his spectacles, brought the book close to his nose, then held it as far off as possible, then brought his nose to the book, then took it away again, then held it up to the light, then turned it this way and that, winked and snuffled and hemmed and coughed—the page was too deeply grimed by the application of his own thumb, to be deciphered by any ocular power. The congregation were at a dead stand. They waited and waited, but the Deacon could not give out the line; every one stared, and the greatest impatience began to be manifested. At last Elder Darby, who commonly took the lead in singing, called out:

“What’s the matter, Deacon?”

“I can’t read it,” replied the Deacon in a dolorous and despairing tone.

“Then spell it,” exclaimed a voice from the gallery.

All eyes were turned that way, and it was found to proceed from Tim Crackbrain, a fellow known for his odd and whimsical habits, and respecting whom nobody could ever satisfy himself whether he was knave, fool, or madman. The Deacon was astounded, the congregation gaped and stared, but there was no more singing that day. The profane behaviour of Tim caused great scandal, and he was severely taken in hand by a regular kirk session.

This, however, was not the whole, for it was plainly to be perceived that the old system had received a severe blow in this occurrence, as no one could deny that such an awkward affair could never have happened in the improved method of psalmody. The affair was seized by the advocates of improvement, and turned against their opponents. Deacon Dogskin and his old psalm-book got into decidedly bad odour; the result could no longer be doubtful; a parish meeting was held, and a resolution passed to abolish the old system, and establish a singing school. In such a manner departed this life, that venerable relic of ecclesiastical antiquity, read-a-line-and-sing-a-line, and we despatched our old acquaintance to the tomb of oblivion, unwept, unhonoured, but not unsung.

This event, like all great revolutions, did not fail to give sad umbrage to many in the church; and as to Deacon Dogskin, who had fought as the great champion of the primitive system, he took it in such dudgeon that he fell into a fit of the

sullens, which resulted in a determination to leave a community where his opinion and authority had been so flagrantly set at naught. Within two years, therefore, he sold off his farm, settled all his concerns both temporal and spiritual in the town, and removed to a village about fifteen miles distant. His ostensible motive for the removal was his declining age, which he declared to be unequal to the cultivation of so large a farm as he possessed in our neighbourhood; but the true reason was guessed at by every one, as the Deacon could never speak of the singing-school without evident marks of chagrin.

Be this as it may, we proceeded to organize the singing-school forthwith, for it was determined to do things in style. First of all, it was necessary to find a singing-master who was competent to instruct us theoretically in the principles of the art, and put us to the full discipline of our powers. No one, of course, thought of going out of the town for this, and our directors shortly pitched upon a personage known to everybody by the name of Hopper Paul. This man knew more tunes than any person within twenty miles, and, for aught we knew, more than any other man in the world. He could sing Old Hundred, and Little Marlborough, and Saint Andrews, and Bray, and Mear, and Tanzar, and Querey, and at least half a dozen others whose names I have forgotten, so that he was looked upon as a musical prodigy.

I shall never forget Hopper Paul, for both the sounds and sights he exhibited were such as could hardly be called earthly. He was about six feet and a half high, exceedingly lank and long, with a countenance which at the first sight would suggest to you the idea that he had suffered a *face-quake*, for the different parts of his visage appeared to have been shaken out of their places and never to have settled properly together. His mouth was capable of such a degree of dilation and collapse and twisting, that it looked like a half a dozen pair of lips sewed into one. The voice to which this comely pair of jaws gave utterance might have been compared to the lowing of a cow, or the deepest bass of an overgrown bull-frog, but hardly to any sound made by human organs.

Hopper Paul, possessing all these accomplishments, was therefore chosen head singer, and teacher of the school, which was immediately set on foot. This was a great affair in the eyes of all the young persons of both sexes, the thing being the first of that sort which had ever been heard of in our parts; for though the natives of the town were a psalm-singing race, like all genuine New Englanders, yet they had hitherto learned to sing much in the same way as they learned to talk, not by theory,

but in the plainest way of practice, each individual joining in with the strains that were chanted at meeting according to the best of his judgment. In this method, as the reader may suppose, they made but a blundering sort of melody, yet as the tunes were few, and each note drawled out to an unconscionable length, all were more or less familiar with their parts, or if they got into the wrong key, had time to change it ere the line was ended. But things were now to be set on a different footing; great deeds were to be done, and each one was anxious to make a figure in the grand choir. All the young people of the parish were assembled, and we began operations.

How we got through our first essays, I need not say, except that we made awkward work enough of it. There were a great many voices that seemed made for nothing but to spoil all our melody: but what could we do? All were determined to learn to sing, and Hopper Paul was of opinion that the bad voices would grow mellow by practice, though how he could think so whenever he heard his own, passes my comprehension. However, we could all raise and fall the notes, and that was something. We met two evenings in each week during the winter, and by the beginning of spring we had got so well drilled in the gamut that we began to practise regular tunes. Now we breathed forth such melodies as I think have seldom been heard elsewhere; but as we had no standard of excellence to show us the true character of our performances, we could never be aware that our music was not equal to the harmony of the spheres.

It was thought a peculiar excellence to sing through the nose, and take a good reasonable time to swell out every note. Many of us were apt to get into too high a key, but that was never regarded, provided we made noise enough. In short, after a great deal more practice we were pronounced to be thoroughly skilled in the science, for our lungs had been put to such a course of discipline that every one of us could roar with a most stentorian grace; and as to our commander-in-chief, no man on earth ever deserved better than he, the name of Boanerges, or Son of Thunder.

It was decided, therefore, that on Fast day next we should take the field; so we were all warned to prepare ourselves to enter the singing seats at the meeting on that eventful day. Should I live a thousand years, I shall never forget it; this was to be the first public exhibition of our prowess, and we were exhorted to do our best. The exhortation was unnecessary, for we were as ambitious as the most zealous of our friends could desire, and we were especially careful in rehearsing the tunes before-hand.

The day arrived, and we marched in a body to take possession. No stalwart knights, at a tournament, ever spurred their chargers into the lists with more pompous and important feelings than we entered the singing seats. The audience, of course, were all expectation, and when the hymn was given out, we heard it with beating hearts.

It was amusing, however, in the midst of our trepidation, to witness the countenance of Deacon Dogskin, who was obliged to sit facing us during the whole service. His looks were as sour and cynical as if he could have driven us out of the house, and he never vouchsafed to cast a glance at us from beginning to end of the performance. There was another person who had been a great stickler for the ancient usage. This was Elder Darby, who had been head singer under the Deacon's administration, and looked upon himself as dividing the honours of that system with the Deacon himself. He accordingly fought hard against the innovation, and was frequently heard to declare that the whole platform of Christian doctrine would be undermined, if more than one line was suffered to be sung at a time. In fact, this personage, being what is emphatically called a "weak brother," but full of zeal and obstinacy, gave us a great deal more trouble than the Deacon, who was not deficient in common shrewdness, notwithstanding his oddities. This was a bitter day, therefore, to Elder Darby, who felt very awkward at finding his occupation gone, and his enemies triumphant all in the same moment.

But we were now called upon to sing, and every eye, except those of the Deacon and a few others, was turned upward: the hymn was given out, Hopper Paul brandished his pitch-pipe and set the tune, and we began with stout hearts and strong lungs. Such sounds had never been heard within those walls before. The windows rattled, and the ceiling shook with the echo, in such a manner that some people thought the great chandelier would have a down-come. Think of the united voices of all the sturdy, able-bodied lads and lassies of the parish pouring forth the most uproarious symphony of linked sweetness long drawn out, that their lungs could furnish, and you will have some faint idea of our melodious intonations. At length we came to a verse in the hymn where the words chimed in with the melody in such a striking and effective manner that the result was overpowering. The verse ran thus:—

"So pilgrims on the scorching sand,
Beneath a burning sky,
Long for a cooling stream at hand,
And they must drink, or die."

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When we struck one after another into the third line, and trolled forth the reiterations,

"Long for a cooling—
Long for a cooling—
Long for a cooling—coo—oo—ooling,"

we verily thought, one and all, that we were soaring up—up—upwards on the combined euphony of the tune and syllables, into the seventh heaven of harmony. The congregation were rapt into ecstasies, and thought they had never heard music till then. It was a most brilliant triumph for us; every voice, as we thought, though of course the malcontents must be excepted, struck in with us, and swelled the loud peal till the walls rung again. But I must not omit to mention the strange conduct of Elder Darby, who, in the midst of this burst of enthusiastic approbation, never relaxed the stern and sour severity of his looks, but took occasion of the first momentary pause in the melody, to utter a very audible and disdainful expression of "Chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff!"

Deacon Grizzle was by no means slow in perceiving these manifestations of the Elder's mortified feelings, and did not fail to join him on his way home from meeting, for the express purpose of annoying him further by commendations of the performances. All he could get in reply was a further exclamation of "Chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff!" In fact, the Elder's obstinacy was incurable; he was seized during the following week with a strange deafness in one of his ears, and as it happened, very strangely too, to be that ear which was turned towards the singing seats when he sat in his pew, he declared it would be impossible to hear sufficiently well on that side of his head, to accompany the singers: as to altering his position, it was not to be thought of: he had occupied the same spot for forty years, and could no more be expected to change his seat than to change his creed. The consequence was, that on the day we began singing, the Elder left off. From that time forth, he never heard the subject of church psalmody alluded to, without a chop-fallen look, a rueful shake of the head, a sad lamentation over the decline of sound Christian doctrine, and a peevish and indignant exclamation of "Chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff! chaff!"

LXIV.

WHERE JOE MERIWEATHER WENT TO.

"I do believe that's Bill Meriweather," said the old lady hostess of the sign of "The Buck" tavern, as attracted by the noise of a horse's hoofs, she raised her eyes from her occupation of stringing dried slips of pumpkin, and descried, this side of the first bend in the road, a traveller riding a jaded horse towards the mansion.

"I do believe that's Bill Meriweather. It's about time for him to be round agin a buyin' shoats. But whar's Joe? Phil-lisy Ann," continued Mrs Harris, raising her voice, "catch a couple of young chickens, and get supper ready soon as ye can, you dratted lazy wench you, for here comes Bill Meriweather. But whar's Joe? How do you do, Mr Meriweather," concluded the old lady, as the stranger arrived in front of the porch.

"Lively," replied that individual as he proceeded to dismount and tie his horse. "How do you come on yourself, old 'omen."

"Pretty well, Bill; how's craps down in your parts?"

"Bad, uncommon bad," replied Bill, "there's a new varmint come around in our country, that's got a mortal likin' fur the tobacker crap. They looks a good deal like a fox, but are as big as a three year old nigger, and kin climb a tree like a squirel, and they steals a dozen or so 'hands' every night, and next mornin' if you notice, you'll see all the tops of the pine-oaks around the plantation kivered with them a dryin', and the infernal chawtobacks—that's what we call 'em—a settin' up in a crotch, a ehawin' what is *cured*, and squirtin' ambeer all over the country. Got any on 'em up here yet?"

"The goodness, Lord ha' mercy, no, Bill! But whar's Joe?" Up to this time Mr Meriweather had been as pleasant and jovial a looking Green River man, as you might find in a week's ride along the southern border of Kentucky, and had finished his lecture on the natural history of the chawto-back and the unsaddling his horse at the same time; but no sooner had the old lady asked the question, "Whar's Joe?" than he instantaneously dropped on the bench alongside the questioner, gave her an imploring look of pity and despair, let his head fall into his open palms, and bending down both until they nearly touched his knees, he uttered such a sigh as

might a Louisville and New Orleans eight-boiler steam-packet in the last stage of collapsed flues.

"Goodness, gracious, Bill! what's the matter?" cried the old lady, letting her stringing apparatus fall. "Hev you got the cramps? Phillisy Ann, bring that bottle here outen the cupboard, quick, and some pepper pods!"

"Ah—h! no!" sighed the sufferer, not changing his position, but mournfully shaking his head, "I ain't got no cramps." However, Phillisy Ann arriving in "no time" with the article of household furniture called for, that gentleman, utterly disregarding the pepper pods, proceeded to pour out into a tumbler, preparatory to drinking, a sufficient quantity of amber-coloured fluid to utterly exterminate any cramps that might, by any possibility, be secretly lingering in his system, or fortify himself against any known number that might attack him in the distant future; and having finished, immediately assumed his former position, and went into most surprisingly exact imitations of a wheezy locomotive on a foggy morning.

"Merciful powers! what can the matter be?" exclaimed the widow, now thoroughly excited, as Mr Meriweather appeared to be getting no better, but was rocking himself up and down, "like a man who is sawing marble," groaning and muttering inarticulate sounds, as if in the last extremity of bodily anguish. But Mr Meriweather was for some time unable to make any reply that could be understood, until at length, at the conclusion of a very fierce paroxysm, the widow thought she could catch the two words, "Poor Joe!"

"Is there anything the matter with Joe?" asked the old lady. If it were possible for any *one* man to feel and suffer, as far as appearances went, all the agony and misery that a half dozen of the most miserable and unfortunate of the human family ever have felt and suffered, and yet live, Mr Meriweather certainly was that individual, for he immediately went off into such a state of sighs, groans, and lamentations, mingled with exclamations of "Poor Joe!" "Poor Brother Joe!" that the widow, aroused to the highest state of sympathy and pity, could do nothing but wipe her eyes with her apron, and repeat the question.

"Whar is Joe, Mr Meriweather, is he sick?"

"Oh—h—no!" groaned his mourning brother.

"Is he dead then? poor Joe!" faintly inquired the old lady.

"I don't know that," was the broken reply.

"The Lord ha' mercy on our sinful sows! then *whar* is

he?" cried the widow, breaking out afresh. "Is he run away to Orleans—or gone to Californy? Yes, that's it! and the poor boy'll be eaten' up by them 'diggers' that they say goes rootin' round that outlandish country, like a set of mean stinkin' ground-hogs. Poor Joe! he was a fine little fellow, an' it was only the other day last year, when you was on your rounds, that he eat all my little bo——."

"No, he ain't gone to Californy as I know," interrupted his brother.

"Then, for mercy's sake! do tell a body what's become on him!" rather tartly inquired the old lady.

"Why, you see, Mrs Harris," replied Mr Meriweather, still keeping the same position, and interrupting the narrative with several bursts of grief (which we'll leave out). "You see, Mrs Harris, Joe and I went up airly in the spring to get a boat load of rock from Boone county, to put up the foundation of the new houses we're buildin', fur there ain't no rock down in them rich sily bottoms in our parts. Well, we got along pretty considerable, fur we had five kegs of blast along, and what with the hire of some niggers, we managed to get our boat loaded, an' started fur home in about three weeks. You never did see anythin' rain like it did the fust day we was floatin' down, but we worked like a cornfilled nigger ov a Crismus week, and pretty near sundown we'd made a matter ov nigh twenty mile afore we were ashore and tied up. Well, as we didn't have any shelter on the flat, we raised a rousin' big fire on the bank, close to whar she was tied up, and cooked some grub; and I'd eaten a matter of two pounds of side, and half of a possum, and was sittin' on a log, smokin' a Kaintuck regaly, and a talkin' to Brother Joe, who was a standin' chock up agin the fire, with his back to it. You recollex, Mrs Harris, Brother Joe allers was a dressy sort of a chap—fond of brass buttons on his coat and the flaim'est kind of red neckerchers; and this time he had buckskin breeches, with straps under his boots. Well, when I was a talkin' to him ov the prospect fur the next day, all ov a sudden I thought the little feller was a growin' uncommon tall; till I diskivered that the buckskin breeches, that wur as wet as a young rooster in a spring rain, wur beginning to smoke and draw up kinder, and wur a liftin' Brother Joe off the ground.

"'Brother Joe,' sez I, 'you're a goin' up.'"

"'Brother Bill,' sez he, 'I ai'nt a doin' anythin' else.'"

"And he scrunched down mighty hard; but it warn't ov no use, fur afor long he wur a matter of some fifteen feet up in the air."

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" Merciful powers," interrupted the widow.

" ' Brother Joe,' sez I.

" ' I'm here,' sez he.

" ' Catch hold ov the top ov that black-jack,' sez I.

" ' Talk!' sez Brother Joe, and he sorter leaned over and grabbed the saplin', like as maybe you've seed a squ'el haul in an elm switch ov a June mornin'. But it warn't ov no use, fur, old 'omen, ef you'll believe me, it gradually begun to give way at the roots, and afore he'd got five foot higher, it jist slipped out er the ground, as easy as you'd pull up a spring red-dish.

" ' Brother Joe!' sez I agin.

" ' I'm a list'nin',' sez he.

" ' Cut your straps!' sez I, for I seed it was his last chance.

" ' Talk!' sez Brother Joe, tho' he looked sort a reproachful like at me fur broachin' such a subject; but arter apparently considerin' awhile, he outs with his jack-knife, an' leanin' over sideways, made a rip at the sole of his left foot. There was a considerable deal ov cracklin' fur a second or two, then a crash sorter like as if a waggon-load of wood had bruck down, and the fust thing I know'd, the t'other leg shot up like, and started him; and the last thing I seed ov Brother Joe, he was a *whirlin' round like a four-spoked wheel with the rim off, away overclost toward sundown!* "

LXV.

GEORGIA THEATRICALS.

If my memory fail me not, the 10th of June, 18—, found me, at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, ascending a long and gentle slope in what was called "The Dark Corner" of Lincoln. I believe it took its name from the moral darkness which reigned over that portion of the county at the time of which I am speaking. If, in this point of view, it was but a shade darker than the county, it was inconceivably dark. If any man can name a trick or sin which had not been committed at the time of which I am speaking in the very focus of all the county's illumination (Lincolnton), he must himself be the most inventive of the tricky, and the very Judas of sinners. Since that time, however (all humour aside), Lincoln has become a living proof "that light shineth in darkness." Could I

venture to mingle the solemn with the ludicrous, even for the purposes of honourable contrast, I could adduce from this county instances of the most numerous and wonderful transitions, from vice and folly to virtue and holiness, which have ever perhaps been witnessed since the days of the Apostolic ministry.

So much, lest it should be thought by some that what I am about to relate is characteristic of the county in which it occurred.

Whatever may be said of the moral condition of the Dark Corner at the time just mentioned, its natural condition was anything but dark. It smiled in all the charms of spring: and spring borrowed new charms from its undulating grounds, its luxuriant woodlands, its sportive streams, its vocal birds, and its blushing flowers.

Rapt with the enchantment of the season, and the scenery around me, I was slowly rising the slope, when I was startled by loud, profane, and boisterous voices, which seemed to proceed from a thick covert of undergrowth about two hundred yards in the advance of me, and about one hundred to the right of my road:

"You kin, kin you?"

"Yes, I kin, and am able to do it! Bo—oo—oo! Oh, wake snakes, and walk your chalks! Brimstone and fire! don't hold me, Nick Stoval! The fight's made up, and let's go at it. My soul, if I don't jump down his throat and gallop every chitterling out of him before you can say 'quit!'"

"Now, Nick, don't hold him. Jist let the wild cat come, and I'll tame him. Ned'll see me a fair fight, won't you, Ned?"

"Oh yes, I'll see a fair fight, blame my old shoes if I don't."

"That is sufficient, as Tom Haynes said when he saw the elephant. Now let him come!"

Thus they went on, with countless oaths interspersed, which I dare not even hint at, and with much that I could not distinctly hear.

"In mercy's name," thought I, "what band of ruffians has selected this holy season and this heavenly retreat for such Pandemonian riots?"

I quickened my gait, and had come nearly opposite to the thick grove whence the noise proceeded, when my eye caught indistinctly and at intervals, through the foliage of the dwarf oaks and hickories which intervened, glimpses of a man or men who seemed to be in a violent struggle, and I could occasionally catch those deep-drawn emphatic oaths which men in conflict

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utter when they deal blows. I dismounted, and hurried to the spot with all speed. I had overcome about half the space which separated it from me, when I saw the combatants come to the ground, and after a short struggle, I saw the uppermost one (for I could not see the other) make a heavy plunge with both his thumbs, and at the same instant I heard a cry :

"Enough! my eye's out!"

I was so completely horror-struck that I stood transfixed for a moment to the spot where the cry met me. The accomplices in the hellish deed which had been perpetrated had all fled at my approach; at least I supposed so, for they were not to be seen.

"Now you old corn-shucking rascal," said the victor (a youth about eighteen years old), as he rose from the ground, "come cutt'n your shines 'bout me agin, next time I come to the Court House, will you? Get your owl eye in again, if you can."

At this moment he saw me for the first time. He looked excessively embarrassed, and was moving off when I called to him in a tone emboldened by my office and the iniquity of his crime :

"Come back, you villain, and assist me in relieving your fellow-mortal, whom you have ruined for ever!"

My rudeness subdued his embarrassment in an instant, and with a taunting curl of the nose he replied :

"You needn't kick before you're spurred. There ain't nobody there, nor han't been nother. I was jist seein' how I could 'a fou't."

So saying, he bounded to his plough, which stood in the fence about fifty yards beyond the battle-ground.

And would you believe it, gentle reader, his report was true? All that I had heard and seen was nothing more or less than a Lincoln rehearsal, in which the youth who had just left me had played all the parts of all the characters in a Court House fight.

I went to the ground from which he had risen, and there were the prints of his two thumbs plunged up to the balls in the mellow earth, about the distance of a man's eyes apart, and the ground around was broken up, as if two stags had been engaged upon it.

LXVI.

TAKING THE CENSUS.

OUR next encounter was with an old lady, notorious in her neighbourhood for her garrulity and simple-mindedness. Her loquacity knew no bounds; it was constant, unremitting, interminable, and sometimes laughably silly. She was interested in quite a large Chancery suit, which had been dragging its slow length for several years, and furnished her with a conversational fund, which she drew upon extensively, under the idea that its merits could never be sufficiently discussed. Having been warned of her propensity, and being somewhat hurried when we called upon her, we were disposed to get through business as soon as possible, and without hearing her enumeration of the strong points of her law case. Striding into the house, and drawing our papers:

"Taking the census, Ma'am," quoth we.

"Ah, well, yes! bless your soul, take a seat. Now do! Are you the gentlemen that Mr Fillmore has sent out to take the census? I wonder—well, good Lord, look down! how was Mr Fillmore and family when you seed him?"

We told her we had never seen the President; didn't know him from a piece of sole-leather; "we had been written to to take the census."

"Well now, there agin! love your soul! Well, I s'pose Mr Fillmore writ you a letter, did he? No! Well, God be praised, there's mighty little *here* to take down; times is hard, God's will be done! but looks like people can't get their rights in this country, and the law is all for the rich, and none for the poor, praise the Lord! Did you ever hear tell of that case my boys has got agin old Simpson? Looks like they will never get to the end on it, glory to his name! The children will suffer, I'm mighty *afeard*, Lord give us grace! Did you ever see Judge B.? Yes! Well, the Lord preserve us! Did you ever hear him say what he's agwine to do in the boys' case agin Simpson? No! Good Lord! Well, Squire, *will* you ax him the next time you see him, and write me word, and tell him what I say? I'm nothing but a poor widow, and my boys has got no larnin', and old Simpson tuk 'em in. It's a mighty hard case, and the will ought never to a been broke, but—"

Here we interposed, and told the old lady that our time was

precious—that we wished to take down the number of her family, and the produce raised by her last year, and be off. After a good deal of trouble, we got through with the description of the members of her family, and the “statistical table,” as far as the article “cloth.”

“How many yards of cotton cloth did you weave in 1850, Ma’am?”

“Well now, the Lord have mercy! less see. You know Sally Higgins that used to live in the Smith settlement? Poor thing! her daddy drove her off all on the ’count of Jack Miller, poor creetur! poor gal! she couldn’t help it, I dare say. Well, Sally she come to stay ’long wi’ me when the old man druv her away, and she was a powerful good hand to weave, and I *did* think she’d help me a power. Well, arter she’d bin here awhile, her baby hit took sick, and old Miss Stringer she undertook to help it. She’s a powerful good hand, old Miss Stringer, on roots and yearbs and sich like! Well, the Lord look down from above! she made a sort of a tea, as I was a tellin’, and she gin it to Sally’s baby; it got wuss—the poor creetur—and she gin it tea, and looked like the more she gin it tea, the more—”

“My dear Madam, I’m in a hurry—please tell me how many yards of cotton you wove in 1850. I want to get through and go on.”

“Well, well, the Lord have mercy! who’d a thought you’d a bin so snappish? Well, as I was a sayin’, Sally’s child it kept gettin’ wus, and old Miss Stringer she kept a givin’ it the yearb tea, till at last the child hit looked like hit would die anyhow. And ’bout the time the child was at its wust, old Daddy Sikes he come along, and he said if we git some nightshed berries and stew them with a little cream and some hog’s lard. Now old Daddy Sikes is a mighty fine old man, and he giv the boys a heap of mighty good counsel about that case.

“‘Boys,’ said he, ‘I’ll tell you what you do; you go and—’”

“In the name of goodness, old lady,” said we, “tell about your cloth; and let the sick child and Miss Stringer, Daddy Sikes, the boys, and the law-suit, go to Old Scratch. I’m in a hurry!”

“Gracious, bless your dear soul! don’t git aggravated. I was jist a tellin’ you how it come I didn’t weave no cloth last year.”

“Oh, well, you didn’t weave any cloth last year. Good! We’ll go on to the next article.”

"Yes; you see the child hit begun to swell and turn valler, and hit kept a wallin' its eyes, and a moanin', and I know'd—"

"Never mind about the child—just tell me the value of the poultry you raised last year."

"Oh, well—yes—the chickens, you means. Why, the Lord love your poor soul; I reckon you never in your born days see a creetur have the luck that I did—and looks like we never shall have any good luck agin; for ever since old Simpson tuk that case up to the Chancery Court—"

"Never mind the case, let's hear about the chickens, if you please."

"God bless you, honey! the owls destroyed in and about the best half that I did raise. Every blessed night that the Lord did send, they'd come and set on the comb of the house, and hoo, hoo; and one night in particklar I remember, I had just got up with the nightshed salve to 'int the little gal with—"

"Well, well, what was the value of what you did raise?"

"The Lord above look down! They got so bad—the owls did—that they tuk the old hens as well as the young chickens. The night I was a tellin' 'bout, I heard somethin's s-q-u-a-l-l! s-q-u-a-l-l! and says I, "I'll bet that's old Speck, that nasty awdacious owl's got, for I see her go to roost with the chickens up in the plum-tree, forenenst the smoke-house."

"So I went to whar old Miss Stringer was sleepin', and says I,

"'Miss Stringer! oh Miss Stringer! sure's you're born, that owl's got old Speck out'n the plum-tree."

"Well, old Miss Stringer she turned over 'pon her side like, and says she,

"'What did you say, Miss Stokes?"

"And says I:—"

We began to get very tired, and signified the same to the old lady, and begged her to answer us directly, and without circumlocution.

"The Lord Almighty love your dear heart, honey, I'm tellin' you as fast I kin. The owls they got worse and worse; after they'd swept old Speck and all *her* gang, they went to work on t'others; and Bryant (that's one of my boys), he 'lowed he'd shoot the pestersome creeturs. And so one night arter that we hearn one holler, and Bryant he tuk the old musket and went out, and sure enough there

was owley (as he thought) a sittin' on the comb of the house, so he blazed away, and down come—what on airth *did* come down, do you reckon, when Bryant fired?"

"The owl, I suppose."

"No sich thing; no sich thing; the owl warn't thar. 'Twas my old house cat came a tumblin' down spittin', sputterin', and scratchin', and the fur a flyin' every time she jumped, like you'd busted a feather-bed open. Bryant he said the way he come to shoot the cat, instead of the owl, he seed somethin' white—"

"For heaven's sake, Mrs Stokes, give me the value of your poultry, or say you will not. Do one thing or the other."

"Oh, well, dear love your heart, I reckon I had last year nigh about the same as I've got this."

"Then tell me how many dollars' worth you have now, and the thing's settled."

"I'll let you see for yourself," said Widow Stokes; and taking an ear of corn between the logs of the cabin, and shelling off a handful, she commenced scattering the grain, all the while screaming or rather screeching, "Chick! chick! chick! chickee! chickee! chickee! chickee-ee!"

Here they came, roosters, hens, pullets, and little chicks; crowing, cackling, chirping, flying, and fluttering against her sides, pecking at her hands, and creating a din and confusion altogether indescribable. The old lady seemed delighted, thus to exhibit her feathered "stock," and would occasionally exclaim,

"A nice passel! ain't they a nice passel!"

But she never would say what they were worth, and no persuasion could bring her to the point. Our papers at Washington contain no estimate of the value of the Widow Stokes's poultry, though, as she said herself, she had a "mighty nice passel."

LXVII.

A FAMILY PICTURE.

MR HILL, in one of his many visits "down east," was belated one evening, and was compelled to seek shelter at a

small farm-house. He thus describes the family party and the family doings on that evening.

The heads of the family were a Mr and Mrs Jones, who were honoured, on this occasion, with a visit from a plain sort of man, who told me, said Mr Hill, that he taught school in winter, and hired out in haying time. What this man's name was, I do not exactly recollect. It might have been Smith, and for convenience sake we will call him John Smith. This Mr Smith brought a newspaper with him, which was printed weekly, which Mr Jones said—as it did not agree with his politics—was a very weakly consarn.

Mr Jones was seated one side of an old pine table, and Mr Smith on the other. Mrs Jones sat knitting in one corner, and the children under the fire-place—some cracking nuts, others whittling sticks, &c. Mr Jones, after perusing the paper for some time, observed to Mrs Jones, "My dear!"

Mrs Jones. Well.

Mr Jones. It appears.

Mrs J. Well, go on.

Mr J. I say it appears.

Mrs J. Well, law souls, I heard it; go on.

Mr J. I say it appears from a paragraph—

Mrs J. Well, it don't appear as if you were ever going to appear.

Mr J. I say, it appears from a paragraph in this paper—

Mrs J. There—there you go again. Why on airth, Jones, don't you spit it out.

Mr J. I say, it appears from a paragraph in this paper—

Mrs J. Well, I declare, Jones, you are enough to tire the patience of Job. Why on airth don't you out with it?

Mr J. Mrs Jones, will you be quiet. If you get my dander up, I'll raise Satan round this house, and you know it, tew. Mr Smith, you must excuse me. I'm obliged to be a little peremptory to my wife, for if you wasn't here she'd lick me like all natur. Well, as I said, it appears from this paper, that Seth Slope—you know'd Seth Slope, that used to be round here?

Mrs J. Yes; well, go on; out with it.

Mr J. Well, you know he went out in a whalin' voyage.

Mrs J. Yes, well.

Mrs J. Well, it appears he was settin' on the stern, when the vessel give a lee lurch, and he was knocked overboard, and hain't written to his friends since that time.

Mrs J. La, souls! you don't say so.

Before going further, I will endeavour to give you some idea of this Seth Slope. He was what they term down east, "a poor shote;" his principal business was picking up chips, feeding the hogs, &c. &c. I will represent him with his hat. (*Puts on hat.*)

"Mrs Jones says I don't know nothin', and Mr Jones says I don't know nothin' (*laughs*); and everybody says I don't know nothin'; and I say I *do* know nothin' (*laughs*). Don't I pick up all the chips to make the fires? And don't I feed the hogs, and the ducks, and the hens? (*Laughs.*) And don't I go down to the store every morning, for a jug of rum? And don't I take a good suck myself? I don't know nothin'—ha—(*laughs*). And don't I go to church every Sunday? and don't I go up-stairs, and when the folks go to sleep, don't I throw corn on 'em to wake 'em up? And don't I see the fellers winking at the gals, and the gals winking at the fellers? And don't I go home and tell the old folk; and when they come home, don't the old folk kick up the darndest row? (*Laughs.*) And don't I drive the hogs out of the garden, to keep 'em from rooting up the taters? And don't I git asleep there, sometimes, and don't they root *me* up. (*Laughs.*) And didn't I see a fly on Deacon Stoke's red nose, t'other day; and didn't I say, 'Take care, Deacon Stokes, you'll burn his feet?' I don't know nothin', eh! (*Laughs.*)"

This Mrs Jones I have spoken of, was a very good kind of woman, and Mr Jones was considered a very good sort of man; but was rather fond of the bottle. On one occasion, I recollect particularly, he had been to a muster, and came home so much intoxicated that he could hardly stand, and was obliged to lean against the chimney-piece to prevent himself from falling, and Mrs Jones says to him, "Now, Jones, aint you ashamed of yourself? Where on airth do you think you'd go to, if you was to die in that sitiuation?"

Jones (very drunk). "Well, I don't know where I should go to; but I shouldn't go far, without I could go faster than I do now."

As soon as Mr Jones had finished the paragraph in the paper, Mrs Jones threw on her shawl and went over to her neighbours to communicate the news. I will endeavour to give you an idea of Mrs Jones by assuming this shawl and cap. (*Puts on shawl and cap.*)

"Well, Mrs Smith, I suppose you ain't heard the news?"

"La, no, what on airth is it?"

"You recollect Seth Slope, that used to be about here?"

"Yes, very well."

"You know he went a whalin' voyage?"

"Yes."

"Well, it appears, from an advertisement in the papers, that he was sittin' on the starn of the vessel, when the vessel give a lee lurch, that he was knocked overboard and was drowned, and that he has not written to his friends never since. Oh, dear! it's dreadful to think on. Poor critter!—he was such a clever, good-natured, kind soul. I recollect when he was about here, how he used to come into the house and set down, and get up and go out, and come in agin, and set down, and get up and go out. Then he'd go down to the barn, and throw down some hay to the critters, and then he'd come into the house agin, and get up and go out, and go down to the store and get a jug of rum,—and sometimes he'd take a little suck of it himself. But, la, souls! I never cared much about that. Good, clever critter! Then arter he'd come back with the rum, he'd set down a little while, and get up and go out, and pick up chips and drive the hogs out of the garden; and then he'd come into the house and kick over the swill-pail, and set down, and stick his feet over the mantel-piece, and whittle all over the hearth, and spit tobacco juice all over the carpet, and make himself so *sociable*. And poor fellow! now he's gone. Oh, dear! how dreadful wet he must have got! Well, Mrs Smith, it goes to show that we are all accountable *critters*."

LXVIII.

THE FASTEST FUNERAL ON RECORD.

I HAD just crossed the long bridge leading from Boston to Cambridgeport, and was plodding my dusty way on foot through that not very agreeable suburb, on a sultry afternoon in July, with a very creditable thunder-cloud coming up in my rear, when a stout elderly gentleman, with a mulberry-face, a brown coat and pepper-and-salt smalls, reined up his nag, and after learning that I was bound for Old Cambridge, politely invited me to take a seat beside him in the little sort of tax-cart he was driving. Nothing loth, I con-

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sented, and we were soon *en route*. The mare he drove was a very peculiar animal. She had few good points to the eye, being heavy-bodied, hammer-headed, thin in the shoulders, bald-faced, and rejoicing in a little stump of a tail which was almost entirely innocent of hair. But there were "lots of muscle," as Major Longbow says, in her hind quarters.

"She aint no Venus, Sir," said my new acquaintance, pointing with his whip to the object of my scrutiny—"but handsome is as handsome does. Them's my sentiments. She's a rum 'un to look at, but a good 'un to go."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, Sir! That there mare, Sir, has made good time—I may say, *very* good time before the hearse."

"Before the hearse?"

"Before the hearse! S'pose you never heard of *burying a man on time*! I'm a sexton, Sir, and undertaker—Jack Crossbones, at your service—'Daddy Crossbones' they call me at Porter's."

"Ah! I understand. Your mare ran away with the hearse."

"Ran away! A child could hold her. Oh! yes, of course she ran away," added the old gentleman, looking full in my face with a very quizzical expression, and putting the fore finger of his right hand on the right side of his party-coloured proboscis.

"My dear Sir," said I, "you have excited my curiosity amazingly, and I should esteem it as a particular favour if you would be a little less oracular and a little more explicit."

"I don't know as I'd ought to tell you," said my new acquaintance very slowly and tantalizingly. "If you was one of these here writing chaps, you might poke it in the 'Spirit of the Times,' and then it would be all day with me. But I don't care if I do make a clean breast of it. Honour bright, you know."

"Of course."

"Well, then, I live a piece up beyond Old Cambridge—you can see our steeple off on a hill to the right, when we get a little further. Well, one day, I had a customer (he was carried off by typhus) which had to be toted into town—cause why? he had a vault there. So I rubbed down the old mare, and put her in the fills. Ah! Sir! that critter knows as much as an Injun, and more than a Nigger. She's as sober as a judge when she gets the shop—that's what I call the hearse—behind her. You would not think she was a three-minute nag, to look at her. Well, Sir, as luck would have

it, by a sort of providential inspiration, the day before, I'd took off the old wooden springs and set the body on elliptics. For I thought it a hard case that a gentleman who'd been riding easy all his life, should go to his grave on wooden springs. Ah! I deal well by my customers. I thought of patent boxes to the wheels, but I couldn't afford it, and the parish are desperate stingy.

"Well, I got him in, and led off the string—fourteen hacks and a dearbourn wagon at the tail of the funeral. We made a fine show. As luck would have it, just as we came abreast of Porter's, out slides that eternal torment, Bill Sikes, in his new trotting sulky, with the brown horse that he bought for a fast crab, and is mighty good for a rush, but hain't got nigh so much bottom as the mare. Bill's light weight, and his sulky's a mere feather. Well, Sir, Bill came up alongside, and walked his horse a bit. He looked at the mare and then at me, and then he winked. Then he looked at his nag and put his tongue in his cheek, and winked. I looked straight ahead, and only said to myself, 'Cuss you, Bill Sikes.' By-and-by, he let his horse slide. He travelled about a hundred yards, and then held up till I came abreast, and then he winked and bantered me again. It was aggravatin', that's a fact. Says I to myself, says I, 'That's twice you've done it, my buzzum friend and sweet-scented shrub—but you doesn't do that 'ere again.' The third time he bantered me I let him have it. It was only saying, 'Scat you brute,' and she was off—that mare. He had all the odds, you know, for I was toting a two hundred pounder, and he ought to have beat me like breaking sticks, now hadn't he? He had me at the first brush, for I told you the brown horse was a mighty fast one for a little ways. But soon I lapped him. I had no whip, and he could use his string—but he had his hands full.

"Side by side, away we went—rattle te-bang! crack! abuz! thump!—and I afraid of losing my customer on the road; but I was more afraid of losing the race. The reputation of the old mare was at stake, and I swore she should have a fair chance. We went so fast that the posts and rails by the road-side looked like a log fence. The old church and the new one, and the colleges, spun past like Merry-Andrews.

"The hackmen did not know what was to pay, and, afraid of not being in at the death, they put the string on to their teams, and came clattering on behind as if Satan had kicked 'em on eend. Some of the mourners was sporting characters,

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and they craned out of the carriage windows and waved their handkerchiefs. The President of Harvard College himself, inspired by the scene, took off his square tile as I passed his house, and waving it three times round his head, cried,

"Go it, Boots!"

"It is a fact. And I beat him, Sir! I beat him, in three miles, a hundred rods. He gin it up, Sir, in despair."

"His horse was off his feed for a week, and when he took to corn again he wasn't worth a straw. It was acknowledged on all hands to be the fastest funeral on record, though I say it as shouldn't. I'm an undertaker, Sir, and I never yet was overtaken."

On subsequent inquiry at Porter's, where the sporting sexton left me, I found that his story was strictly true in all the main particulars. A terrible rumpus was kicked up about the race, but Crossbones swore lustily that the mare had run away—that he had sawed away two inches of her lip in trying to hold her up, and that he could not have done otherwise, unless he had run her into a fence and spilled his "customer" into the ditch. If any one expects to die anywhere near the sexton's *diggings*, I can assure them that the jolly old boy is still alive and kicking, the very "Ace of Hearts" and "Jack of Spades," and that now both patent boxes and elliptic springs render his professional conveyance the easiest running thing on the road.

THE END.

Bungay:

CLAY AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS.

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